



鈴木大輔  
Daisuke Suzuki  
Illustration  
MF文庫  
J

「そんなことはありません！」

愛の偉大さの前には人種も性別も国境も関係ないんです！

わたしとお兄ちゃんが双子の兄妹同士であることも

些細な問題です！」



「些細じゃねえよ。」

むしろ「一番問題あるところだよ」



姫小路秋子

Akiko Himenokouji

秋人の妹。ブラコン。



「……ウチの妹があんなこと言ってるけど。  
那須原さんはどう思う？」



「答えるまでもない質問をわたくしに振らないで頂戴。

さもなくば今すぐここで下着を脱いで大声を上げるわよ」

「いや意味わからんし……」



那須原  
アナスタシア

Anastasia Nasubara

表情と言動が  
読めない人。





「……じゃあ次は、  
二階堂さんにも  
意見を聞きたいんですが」



「つかさ、お前さんはあたしの愛人になることが決定してるわけだから。  
姫小路秋子が今さら所有権を主張したって手遅れってもんだよなあ、かつかつか」

「うんまあ。



あなたに意見を求めた僕が馬鹿でした」

二階堂嵐

Arashi Nikaido

性欲が強い。  
プレデター  
あだ名は「捕食者」。



「……まあいちおう君の意見も聞こうか、  
銀兵衛」

「むしろ僕はね秋人。

ひとつ屋根の下で暮らすことになった妹くんは、  
君がうっかり劣情を催しやすいかと、と  
心配でならないんだけど」

「僕、そこまで  
信用ないかな……？」

姫小路秋人

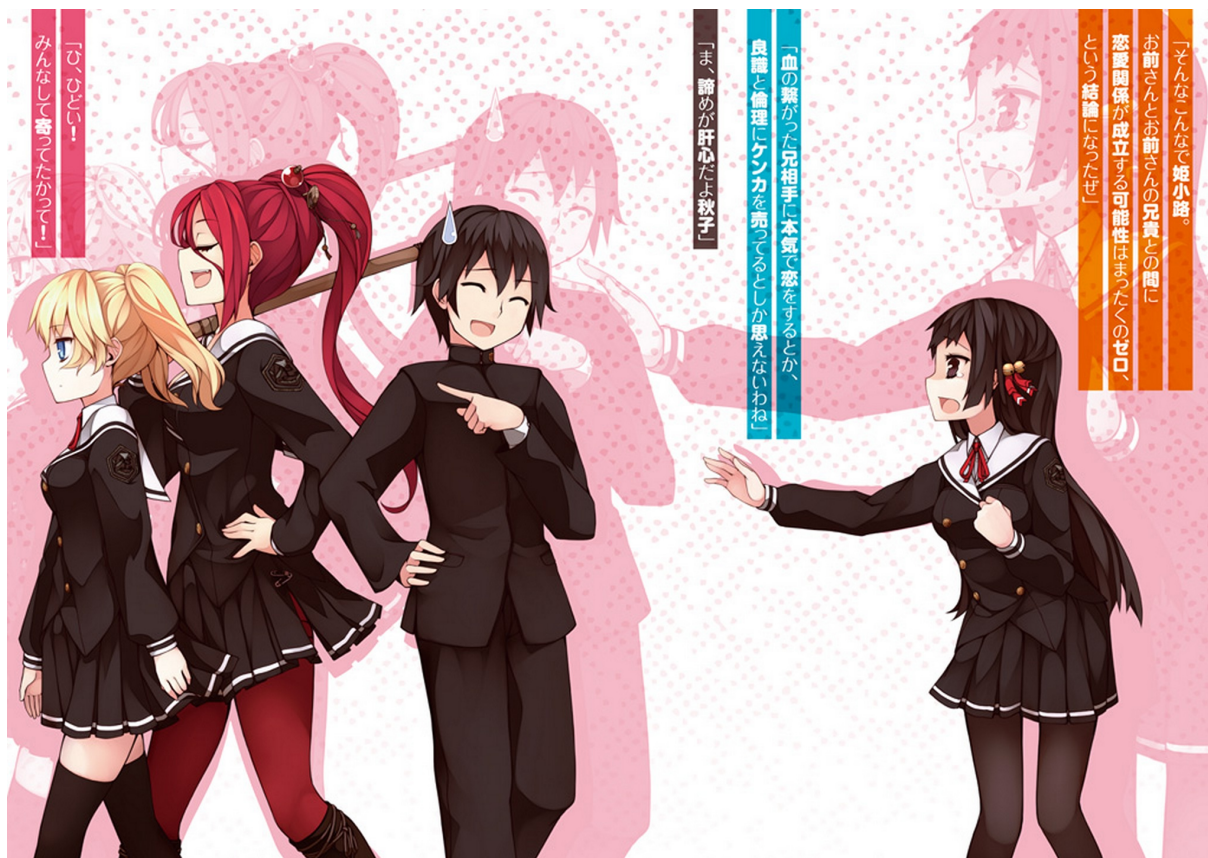
Akito Himenokouji

秋子の兄

猿渡  
銀兵衛春臣

Sawatari  
Ginbe Haruomi

秋人の親友。



# March 25th: First Day Living Together

---

Let me say this first:

This is a story about the peaceful, trouble-free daily life of an older brother and a younger sister who were separated for a while because of certain circumstances and then unexpectedly reunited to live under the same roof again. With that said, we're done with the introduction and can carry on with my uninteresting story.

That's that.

It probably won't be very entertaining.

This should be a given, though.

In my opinion, this how everyday life between a brother and sister should be.

At least that's how I thought it *would* be, but living with my sister has caused me all kinds of trouble.

Just let me say it again, this will likely be an uninteresting story.

There won't be any major incidents, no unexpected events, and definitely none of those extremely gaudy scenes.

We're siblings, so there won't be any incident with sexappeal either.

If you were expecting something like that, then I recommend that you immediately close this book.

There are already plenty of excellent stories out there which deal with major incidents, unexpected events, and extremely gaudy scenes.

Those stories would suit your taste better for sure.

Let me make myself clear once more, this story has no entertainment value whatsoever.

That's because the narrator of this story, and the one who's hoping for this kind of story more than anyone else, is none other than me——

“Onii-chan! Onii-chan!”

“...Hm?”

“I have a request, would you hear me out?”

“What is it?”

“Would you sleep with me tonight?”

“...”

I raised my eyes from the book I was reading and gave the person speaking a strange look.

Her long black hair was cut in line near her eyebrows and made her look like a princess.

Her slightly slanted, graceful eyes were shining with anticipation.

She looked like the very image of someone from a noble family.

She was undisputedly a beautiful girl.

However, she was my sister.

“——Hey, Akiko...”

After finishing the tea in my cup, I continued:

“Back in the day I used to always sleep in the same bed as you, huh?”

“Yes, those days were very happy for me.”

“However, that was because we were still kids back then. We’re both almost 17 years old now.”

“Yes.”

“You know the saying, ‘Boys and girls aren’t the same when they turn 7 years old<sup>[1]</sup>’? We’re not at that age anymore to do stuff like that, understood?”

“Yes, I understand.”

I felt relieved as my sister obediently nodded her head.

*Shouldn’t it be this way?*

*She’s my sister but we’ve been separated and haven’t seen each other for six years.*

*Separated for six years... Our relationship now is more like that of strangers than siblings.*

*However, in the meantime she has grown into more beautiful than I could’ve ever imagined.*

*‘Please sleep with me’, she uttered that kind of thing, didn’t she?*

*That’s an extremely suspicious question, isn’t it?*

“Do not worry, Onii-chan.”

*But she’s actually considering my feelings.*

While showing me a glowing smile, she said:



“Since I’m going to live together with Onii-chan from today onwards, I’ve decided to be a good girl. I’ll listen to everything Onii-chan tells me and give up on trying to sleep in the same bed as him.”

“Mmh. I see. Ah, I’m sorry, this is our long-awaited reunion and I put a damper on you.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, it’s my fault for saying something so childish in the first place.”

“If I could, I’d like to listen to your wish, but it’s just a little... you know?”

“Those words are plenty. Even after having been gone for six years, Onii-chan’s still as kind as ever, right? Akiko’s very happy.”

Suddenly nodding her head at me, Akiko gave me a big smile.

*She must’ve been incredibly emotional after all this time, that’s why she probably said these words.’*

*This must’ve been something like a delusion.*

*Right. From now on my sister and I will live together in this house and there shouldn’t be anything to worry about.*

*I should be able to live a peaceful life together with my sister now – under the same roof.*

“Even so, Onii-chan has become quite daring, hasn’t he?”

My sister said that as she was blushing and fidgeting around.

“Compared to Onii-chan, I’m still a mere child. As expected of Onii-chan.”

“Hm? Is that so. But I don’t remember saying anything that would make you think that.”

“For the first night you don’t want the futon, but rather do it outside... It’s a bit embarrassing, but I’ll do my best!”

“No, wait, hold up!”

I was slightly confused, so I asked her:

“What do you mean ‘first night’?”

“The very first night where a pair of lovers embrace each other.”

“No, no. I don’t wanna hear a definition out of a dictionary. Why did you say something like that all of a sudden? Weren’t we just talking about sleeping in the same futon?”

“No? We were talking about how Onii-chan and I were going to spend the night to commemorate our first one, weren’t we?”

I rubbed my eyebrows and said after a slight pause:

“Now look, I don’t know what kind of plans you have, but I don’t intend to spend this

so-called 'first night' with you, okay?"

"EHHHHHHHHH?!"

Out of the blue, my sister raised her voice.

"T-That's a lie, right?! You're joking, right?! You can't possibly mean that the 'first night', the one I was expecting to have today, that that's not going to happen, right?!"

"...More like I don't understand why you're so shocked at that."

"This is our first meeting in six years!"

"No, something like that has nothing to do with it. Aren't we siblings?"

"But before that we're man and woman!"

"No, you have it backwards, don't you? Aren't we siblings before we're man and woman?"

I rubbed my eyebrows once again and followed up with:

"Let's get the facts straight: You and I are siblings."

"Yes. We've been separated for a long time, finally reunited, and from now on we'll be living in the same house as irreplaceable siblings."

"And what about us and the first night?"

"Yes, Akiko's very excited about it."

"Aren't we blood-related?"

"The power of love surpasses that of blood relation!"

"This love you're speaking of... Do you mean love like in family bonds?"

"There are no different kinds of love. Neither shallow nor deep. The only thing that matters in love is that you care about someone."

*It hasn't been that long since we've reunited and I can already tell that her arguing skills are fairly sharp.*

"Anyway, I understand what you're trying to say."

"Yes. As long as you understand."

"It's already getting late and I have to get up early, so I think it's about time I go to bed."

"I've been waiting for this already. I've been mentally preparing myself."

"Good night, Akiko. I'll be sleeping by myself and you'll sleep by yourself too."

"EHHHHHHHHHHHHH?!"

My sister shouted. Her face turned round like a plum and she looked like some



character from a manga, but... we're siblings so I couldn't help it, right?

Still, she continued to insist.

"How can you say that? That's cruel, Onii-chan!"

"It's not cruel. It's proper judgement."

"Why are you allowing yourself to be held back by some foolish common sense! Aren't we more than just blood-related siblings?!"

"It seems you've put a great amount of thought into that, but do you know what being blood-related means? If we slept together it'd become a very grave matter. Do you understand?"

"But it has been six years since we've seen each other!"

"Even if it has been six years, my answer's still the same."

"I had high hopes! How could you trample on my pure maiden heart like that?! Onii-chan's a cruel person!"

"Since you're a pure-hearted maiden, shouldn't the ethical dilemma of sibling love be a big thing for you?"

"It's just a pair of lovers spending the night together, why can't there be intimate contact?! Is it weird in some way?!"

"That's! My! Point! You've left out one important thing! Aren't we brother and sister before that?!"

I was seriously tired out from this.

I let out a sigh and glanced at my sister.

Her puppy-eyes were tearing up as she was giving me a wishful look.



If one looked at her from the neck downwards, they'd see her slender shoulders and her over proportionately sized breasts.

Both of her hands were wrapped tightly around her waist.

And her long slender legs gave her a very feminine look.

Finally reunited after six years, my sister almost seemed like a stranger to me.



...

...Wait.

I wasn't really thinking any weird thoughts there, just so you know. I swear it!

"Anyways..."

After a small cough, I continued:

"I'm still going to bed, in my room, alone. This is my final answer."

"...I understand. It can't be helped."

My sister looked down dejectedly and let her shoulders droop as she said:

"Since Onii-chan's said to stop here, Akiko will give up."

"I see. I'm sorry, I want to listen to you and help you out since I'm your brother, but..."

"No, it's my fault for asking the impossible of you. Now that I think back on it, we're brother and sister, doing that kind of thing would have been a mistake, right? No matter how I look at it, my emotions got the better of me after I reunited with Onii-chan and so I said those strange things."

"Mm, mm, that's right, that's right."

"This is the second time I've said something wrong. A daughter of the Himenokouji Family should value self-control as one of her core principles. From now on I'm going to be more befitting of the Himenokouji Family. I'm sorry, Onii-chan, please sleep sound. Akiko will not be a hindrance to you."

"Mm, mm, that's a good attitude you have there."

"No, no, this is the least I can say."

"And your real reason is...?"

"Yes. Onii-chan will eventually fall asleep and then I'll wait until he is snoring away, sneak into his room, and—"

\*thump\*

\*BAM\*

\*clickclickclick\*

"Ahh! You've not only closed the door on me, you've also set both locks, didn't you?! How am I supposed to sneak into your room at night now?! That's cruel, too cruel! Onii-chan!"

She kept saying those unreasonable words outside my door, but I didn't care. I laid my head down on the futon and slept peacefully with my earplugs on.

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## Notes

1. This is a Japanese saying. It basically means when boys and girls become seven, they become sexually aware of the other gender, so they can't sleep together like little kids do. The age seven in Japan also signifies is not a kid anymore. See on [Wikipedia](#)



## March 26th: Second Day Living Together

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16 years old.

Male.

Second year high school student.

Average height.

Ordinary face.

Grades neither good nor bad.

I had lost my parents when I was a child and lived with my relatives from there on – except for this, I had lived a normal life without really being interested in anything.

This had been the story of my, Himenokouji Akito's<sup>[1]</sup>, life up until a few days ago.

“I think being a bro-con's very special.”

While we were eating breakfast, my sister insisted:

“Brother complex... when two blood-related siblings have intimate relations with each other – that kind of forbidden love. You should think about it as well. There are billions living on Earth, but how many can say that they're bro-cons? One or two people at best, there've probably never been more than ten, right? First off, Onii-chan, you should be able to at least recognize that we're a rare kind. Should you not recognize that there's a great need for this kind of people and embrace any close relatives you know of with that kind of special quality?”

“Mm, mm!”

“With that said, I want to add that I'm a huge bro-con, and furthermore I believe that people with this kind of quality should be proud of themselves! Since I happen to be one of those bro-cons, I believe that a reward is due, yes?”

“That so? By the way, this miso soup's pretty good, huh?”

“Yes, I'm very proud of it. Would you care for seconds?”

“Oh, thank you. I believe I do.”

“Okay. About how much do you want? A whole bowl? Half a bowl?”

“Well, I think I'll have half a bowl.”

“Understood... Here.”

“Mm. Thank you.”

“You’re having quite the healthy appetite today, haven’t you? Now, about our bro-con talk—”

“Oh? This Tsukemono<sup>[2]</sup> are also pretty good! Did you make those, too?”

“Yes, since I’m living with Onii-chan now, I prepared a Nukadoko<sup>[3]</sup> beforehand. Is the taste to your liking?”

“Yes, this is pretty tasty. Your cooking has gotten good, Akiko.”

“Yes, I’ve been practicing a lot. So about the bro-con talk——”

“Oh! This Furikake<sup>[4]</sup> is pretty tasty.”

“Those are just things I found at the store! That aside, Onii-chan, aren’t you going to listen to what’s on my mind?!”

My sister flew into a rage when she noticed what I was trying to do.

But what was wrong with that?

There was nothing enjoyable about listening to a speech on bro-cons first thing in the morning.

Furthermore, the target of her affection was none other than me.

“It’s a very important matter, so can you please listen to me?!”

“No, I mean...”

I took a deep breath and said:

“I understand that you’re a bro-con, but how come you like me? Honestly, I really think there’s nothing to likable about me.”

“Don’t say such things!”

My sister insisted with her fists shaking.

“I think Onii-chan’s very cool! I’ve been devoting myself to Onii-chan for a long time now!”

“Even though we’ve been apart for six years? On top of that, didn’t we only just reunite yesterday?”

“Something like that doesn’t matter!”

*I don’t understand how she can say something like that, but anyway, I have a firm hold on my own beliefs.*

“Alright, I understand.”

For the time being I gave in to her.

“I’ll listen to what you have to say seriously. Well, I can’t just keep ignoring it. That

fetish of my little sister who's going to live with me."

"Please don't call it a fetish. It's my personality— personality! You could also say that it's my very identity!"

"I understand, I understand. You being a bro-con is your personality and it's a rare trait you don't often see as well as something you're taking pride in. So? What is it you wanted to say?"

"Yes, right away."

Clearing her throat with a cough, she said:

"This morning's breakfast was very good, right? Please reward me by carrying me in your arms."

"...I don't know what's going on in that head of yours, but you're really making me worry about you.

"I'm sorry. I got a little carried away."

"As long as you understand..."

"Yes, I'll give up on being carried. A kiss will do."

"No wait, how did it get to that?"

"Embracing me's also okay."

"That isn't even a hug anymore, we'd basically having a man/woman relationship!"

"Anyhow!"

My sister, with a look of disbelief on her face and her eyebrows raised, said:

"All I want is to get a reward from Onii-chan! Why can't you understand?!"

"Hey, I'm the one who should be angry here, right?"

"The point is, all I want is to flirt with Onii-chan, just that and I'll be satisfied!"

"You're showing your true intentions again."

"...Fufu, you still haven't realized it yet, Onii-chan."

While smiling, my sister had raised her lips in a bold manner and laughed.

"By continuing the argument while acting indifferent, you could say that we're already flirting in a way. If someone saw this situation, they would definitely think that this was the case. 'Those two are madly in love', they would think. Fufu, even if you haven't been tricked by me already, I still caught you off-guard. Onii-chan's a very cute person."

"Anyways, can I get some more miso soup, please? It's incredibly delicious."

"Yes! There's a lot of it, so eat to your heart's content."



For some reason she looked like a villain as she was mumbling to herself, but she still gave me my bowl while smiling.

It was very cute.

How should I put it... my lively reunion with my sister still hadn't ended, but I was simply grateful that *this* situation did.

No matter how you put it, serious conversations about bro-cons are probably only going to cause an uproar and weird things to be said.

Well, don't get me wrong, I wasn't unhappy about this. After all, that's just the kind of person my sister was.



It's true.

My sister had often been clinging to me.

We did everything together ever since we were kids.

Our house was usually empty since both of our parents were always working, so my sister gave me all of her attention, we were almost the same age, after all.

'I love you, Onii-chan!'

I had a hunch that something was off when she kept saying those words everyday.

At that time I would've never imagined *that* even in my wildest dreams, of course.

That the 'love' she meant was not a familial one, but rather the one between man and woman.

"Today's weather is nice, isn't it?"

Sitting side-by-side with me on the veranda, my sister was talking while holding a cup of tea with steam rising from it.

With a relaxed expression that looked like a cat basking in the sun, she said:

"...If Onii-chan'd let me have a lap-pillow as well, I'd be completely satisfied."

"I'll say it just once, I won't do that, okay?"

"...If Onii-chan'd let me have a lap-pillow as well, I'd have no more regrets."

"You've ruined my mood in one go."

Although I said that, I was actually still relaxing with a good mood.

We had been separated for a long time, and we had become like strangers...

But my sister was still my sister.

That's right.

It was currently the end of March.

We had been waiting for spring break to come, and then we moved out.

We had both stopped being dependent on the ones who took care of us.

After 70 years this two-storied wooden house had become tattered.

...Now that I think about it, that had been a pretty bold move.

The repairs still hadn't been completed at that time and the yard was covered with dead grass.

Compared to the houses we came from, this place looked like a rather run-down dwelling.

Since it had been scheduled for demolition soon, the only apparent inhabitants of this dorm were my sister and I...

"I'm grateful to the Arisuga Family."

My sister said with a diligent voice.

"It must've been tough for them, always taking care of me and helping me out with everything. They raised me even though I wasn't even their real daughter."

"That's right, huh? Kyotsugu-san and Shouko-san both helped us to get this place. I'm truly thankful for their help. Without them we wouldn't be here right now..."

"We can finally be at ease now."

"I guess that's right."

"But as a matter of fact, ever since long ago, I had always believed in it. Ever since Onii-chan and I were separated, I knew. That once I left the Arisugawa house, Onii-chan and I would live together."

"Well, it has finally happened, right? What you've been waiting for all this time."

"Yes. It's finally happened. Finally."

My sister said with a slight smile.

It was the kind of fleeting smile one would carry when it's a period where hot and cold days alternate, but then one ends up getting six warm days and only one cold day, and then it's the perfect time to watch the cherry blossoms fall.

Those six years seemed to have gone by so fast.



“So once again, I’m pleased to meet you. I’ll be in your care from now on, Onii-chan.”

I believe my sister had been raised incredibly well.

She was raised like a person from one of the most distinguished families.

Her appearance, movement, and behavior proved it.

No matter what happened, she'd never completely lose her temper, she had turned into a splendid young lady.

The Arisugawa Family had let us exchange letters during those six years (although the Arisugawa and Takanomiya Families both checked the contents, I forgave them after several months). For just that point I was very thankful.

Well, growing up with someone who prided herself for being a bro-con was... entertaining, but I think it was a bit painful as well. Kind of like getting a tooth pulled out in one go, that kind of feeling.

"...I'm sorry, Onii-chan."

While she was thinking of something, my sister offered me an apology.

"I talked about things that made you feel unpleasant, didn't I, Onii-chan? Let's stop with this improper topic."

"Yes... that sounds good."

"We did have a good relationship as siblings. But now that we are reunited, I think we kind of feel awkward to each other."

"Hm. That's right, huh?"

"Yes, it must be like that."

My sister cleared her throat with a cough, looked over to me with a serious expression, and said:

"...Akito-san."

"Eh?"

"Akito-san."

"...?"

I was called by my first name all of a sudden.

"Eh? What is it? What's wrong? Why are you calling me that all of a sudden? Are you not going to call me 'Onii-chan' like you usually do?"

"Correct, I won't, Akito-san."

My sister energetically let out a 'gugugu' sound and while bringing her face close to me, said:

"Our relationship right now, doesn't it seem kind of awkward? Akito-san."

"Eh? Mm, well... I guess so?"

It had been a long time since our separation and we were now both in that sensitive age of puberty.

Back when we were kids, I had said similar things and wanted to get closer, but this



discussion was a little unreasonable nonetheless, don't you think?

Of course, I did want to get closer to my sister, but still.

"It can't be helped, you understand? Akito-san."

While urging the indecisive me with a 'gugugu', my sister spoke heatedly.

"It's a shame, though. It took a lot of hardships for us to live together and yet... even though we're real siblings, we seem like strangers. Don't you think that too? Akito-san."

"Y-Yeah. I guess you're right."

*I understand that.*

*What kind of relationship does calling me by my first name imply?*

*Also, how come you're adding 'Akito-san' to the end of all your sentences?*

"Yes. It seems you've noticed."

she continued smilingly:

"I've called you Onii-chan all these years, but I'm forcing myself to call you by your first name. It takes a lot of effort."

"Huh?"

"I mean, isn't that right? Calling someone by their first name, is that not something only people with a close relationship would do? But I'll try my best to call you that."

There certainly was some truth to that.

I don't know about that in other parts of the world, but in Japan, if you want to call someone by their first name, various conditions have to be cleared. That part is common sense at least. Calling each other by our first names would automatically reduce the awkwardness between us.

*I see. She's trying to solve this in her own way. Well, I worry about it too much. I'm the older brother, so naturally I need to be the one taking initiative——*

"It's not that simple!"

I retorted by reflex.

"Isn't it weird nonetheless? It feels kind of strange, calling you by your first name."

"It's just a matter of practice. You'll get used to it in no time."

"No, it's just... being called Akito-san by my own sister is a little... how should I put it, a bit strange."

"They say a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. We have to start off by doing the things we can."

"Well, I understand that much, but..."

"It's no... good?"

"Hm. Well, I wouldn't really say it's absolutely no good. There's nothing strange about the ethics of it, and it's not prohibited, but..."

"Please allow it. With this, I feel like we can become one step closer. Let's close the gap between us by doing this. Step by step, we'll remove this awkwardness between you and I."

With my sister's insistence, I was slowly starting to change my mind. My sister was going to live with me from now on, so if the gap created a weird atmosphere, it certainly would become a bit difficult. I, too, had been waiting for an idea that would help fixing this.

"Okay, got it. Let's try it."

"Yes. Thank you very much for listening to me."

"You don't have to thank me. Since we're going to live together from now on, I also want to improve our relationship."

"Thank you very much. Hearing those words makes me happy."

She smiled. A smile that would get a full score was blooming.

...Yes.

It had been like this ever since we were children.

Ever since my sister was little, she had always been a good girl.

I don't want to boast, but her good upbringing is partly thanks to me. As I said earlier, our parents weren't around often. As such, the job to raise my little sister fell onto me. I told her over and over again to 'become a splendid person', she diligently listened to me and did just that.

"Well, without further ado."

My little sister cleared her throat with a cough and said:

"Akito-san."

"Hm? What is it?"

"It's nothing. I just wanted to call your name."

"...I see."

"Ehehe. Akito-san."

"What?"

"Nothing. I'm just calling your name."

"...I see."

My sister had gotten into a good mood all of a sudden.

...Well, if it only got rid of that weird feeling between us, then that alone'd be good enough for me. All those six years hadn't been very reliable. If this could at least help me atone a little bit, then it wouldn't be bad.

"In any case, you seem pretty happy, huh, Akiko?"

"Yes, I'm very happy. With this, I'm one step closer to my dream."

"Dream?"

"After all, Akito-san is more of a late bloomer than I expected."

My sister twisted around while saying this.

"We're finally together in our love nest, yet we're in this awkward state where you've not even tried to lay a finger on me... We have to break this predicament as soon as possible. If we don't tear down those walls between us, we'll never be able to commemorate our first night, right?"

"Akiko."

"Yes."

"I think I won't allow it after all."

"Ehhhhhhhhh?!"

My sister yelled while her head was bent back in surprise.

"Or rather, I find it strange that you're surprised at that. Understand? Really, I can't let my guard down. No matter what it is, you always try to go back in that direction."

"But, don't lovers call each other by their first names?"

"When did we become lovers? We're still siblings, you know?!"

"How cruel! How could you change your mind on what we talked about earlier! There should be a limit to how fickle you can be!"

"Anyway, I forbid it."

"Wait! Wait, please!"

My sister desperately pleaded to me.

"Well, let's do this, then. What if we just change how we call each other a little, will that work?"

*What is it this time?*

"Yes. If I just change the nuance of how I call you, perhaps it'll clean the bad impression that Onii-chan has of me. For example——"

My sister coughed twice to clear her throat and then said with a smile:

"...Akito-san♥."

"Whoa."

*What's this? Is it just my imagination or does it feel really dangerous now?*

"How's that?"

"Well, even if you ask how it is, when *you* do this it's a bit.."

"This one is no good? Well, how about this then..."

She coughed twice again and smiled.

"...Akito-san *\*panting\**."

"What?"

*What's with her? It feels even more dangerous now... It actually gives me the creeps."*

"Hm. This one's no good either, huh? Well then, what about... *\*cough\* \*cough\** ... Akito-san. *\*guhehe\**"

"Err, I can see your true intentions coming through with that."

I understood that it'd end up like this.

Really, this sister of mine...

"You know, weren't you trying to clean this bad image I had in mind? It's clear my image has gotten even worse now."

"Ehehe. I was found out."

"...You know, can you please try to be a bit more responsible? Why do you try to get things into that direction... are you some kind of cat in heat?"

"Hmph. That's a little impolite, isn't it?"

"Ah...Well, guess you're right. Sorry."

"Yes, lumping me together with cats troubles me. While I'm a cat lover who can recognize the immense charm of them which makes you want to hug them, in the end cats are just creatures who breed while in heat only. I, on the other hand, am someone who's sexually excited all year round, cats can't even compare to me. It's easily my victory."

"...I've listened to you all the way to the end, and yet it was for naught! How am I supposed to comfort myself?!"

*Whew*, I stopped and took a short breath.

All this time my little sister was watching me with a smile on her face.

*...Well, I guess I'll leave it like that.*

*All of these dumb conversations we've had have slowly helped our awkwardness.*



*My sister must have anticipated that the conversation would end up like this.*

“Don’t worry, Onii-chan. I don’t have that kind of feelings for anyone else. Onii-chan’s the only one for me.”

“Err, I don’t know what to say.”

I sighed once more.

My cute and obedient little sister.

Thus, our reunion ended and I started living with her, although it’s not what I originally had in mind.

To tell the truth, it was a bit too much for me to handle.

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### **Notes**

1. In Japan surnames are written in front of first names.
2. Japanese pickled vegetables.
3. Bed of salted rice-bran used for pickling.
4. Dried food sprinkled over rice.

# March 27th: Third Day Living Together

---

\*TRRRRRR\* \*TRRRRRR\*[1]

「Hey, you. How you doin'？」

The voice on the other side of the line was exceptionally cheerful.

「I've finally got you, aren't you a bit cold? I've been waiting for you to call for days.」

However, the words were filled with a bit of complaint.

“Sorry, sorry. I've been busy with things and settling in.”

「Well, it's 'kay. Though I'm cryin' myself to sleep every night while I'm waitin' for you to call. But now that you did, I feel like that fog has been lifted from my heart. Well, enough of that, I forgive that cold shoulder.」

“I think you're exaggerating a bit...”

「So how's it goin'? Bein' newly-weds with your beautiful little sister.」

“No, we're not really like newly-weds. She's just living here. Really, you always say stuff like that...”

「Hmph. Well, gimme a brief heads up of what's happened with your sister so far.」

“Mm, well. It's kinda like this...”

I said, and then informed my friend of everything that had happened.

「——I see. Seems you've been a bit troubled.」

“Well, yeah, kinda. Kyotsugu-san and Shouko-san, the Arisugawa Family, I really must commend them for raising such a splendid lady, but—”

「Splendid's splendid, right?」

“Kind of, she has been raised like a noble young lady, no doubt. If it weren't for her behaviour towards me.”

「I've heard all you said, but still, I think your sister's got plenty of moderation, doesn't she?」

“And what about her sexual inclinations towards her brother?”

「Well, can't be helped. Meanin', can't be helped that your little sister loves and loves you so, so much, right? You're the only man in her life.”

“.....Aren't we blood-related?”

「That's none of my concern. Anyways, there's no mistakin' that your little sister'd love

to cross the line between siblings, huh?]

“Yup. I think that’s it after all.”

「You’re just blowin’ things out of proportion. I think you’re just imaginin’ stuff. There must be some sorta other explanation for your little sister.」

*Hm.*

*I’ve never really thought about it much, but maybe my sister’s behavior does have some other reason behind it.*

「Well, it’s probably this, the thing they call ‘bein’ aggravated’, maybe?」

“Aggravated?”

「When you’ve got a cold that’s 90% gone, but the cough in your throat still doesn’t go away for days, kinda like that. Isn’t that the feelin’ you get about your little sister?」

“Hm?”

「Like, your parents were always away from home, so you were like a foster parent and educated your sister, right? Although you two were fraternal twins and at the same age.」

“Mm. Well, I do get that feeling.”

「Everyone has more or less been a mother-or-father-con at some point... You could say that. For the most part, the first person of the opposite sex one encounters would of course be their mother or father. But for your little sister, she was raised differently... In other words, you, the older brother, were the one blood relative close to her when she was being raised. That’s why you were the first person of the opposite sex she noticed, right?」

“Mm, well... I guess.”

「Livin’ with someone for long would normally make you come to a conclusion. ‘It’s not right to love this person in that way.’ Your mind and body would get that. But in your little sister’s case, she unfortunately was about to understand right when you two were separated. The necessary process has been interrupted, the necessary person wasn’t there, it’s kinda like that.」

“Well, even then. How is this similar to the aggravation of a cold?”

「Well, usually the reason for a cold’s aggravation is that the necessary rest and nourishment hasn’t been taken, right?」

I understood it.

Certainly, that was possible. The words of my friend had been smooth and it was somehow easy to come to an agreement with them.

However, it was that...

Going by that explanation, my sister’s ‘aggravation’ had been my fault, that’s how it

felt.

Still, that was a little, how should I say it, it just wasn't something I could agree with.

I mean, I had been desperate back then.

Both of our parents had been the worst when it came to being a family, but they weren't people we could hate. Just like how kids get engrossed in work with sparkling eyes, we hadn't been able to tell our parents to just ignore their work.

That's why back in those days, I had been desperate in my own way.

One way or the other, I had taken on the duty to raise her properly, that was the kind of thing I had been dealing with.

「Well, you don't have to worry about it too much.」

My friend said.

「Like I said, your little sister's got plenty of moderation. 'N so she won't do anythin' reckless.」

“...That so?”

「That's how it is, right? Though she's finally been reunited with the men she really, *really* loves, she still hasn't put a hand on you, she's respectin' your intentions, right? If that isn't called moderation, then what is?」

“Eh? Like that, it feels like I'm someone who should be pushed down?”

「Of course. If I were your sister, I would've humped you the second we met.」

“Wow.”

「Well, doesn't look to me like that will happen, though. You should relax now that you can make up for the lost time with your little sister. Although, if she's gotten so beautiful in those years that you almost forget that you're siblings, then it's a different story.」

“Haha, there's no way that that could've happened.”

I couldn't really say that my friend hit a bullseye, could I?



——With this and that, the conversation with my friend that I hadn't talked with in a while ended.

*That took a while...*

I tilted my neck with a quick glance at the clock in the living room.

My sister still hadn't come out of the bath.



*Well, I do know that girls can take their sweet time in the bath. Even so, isn't that taking a bit too long? I've been waiting for almost an hour already?*

*...I should go check on her.*

Just so that you know.

Approaching a private space like a bathroom was embarrassing for me, and on top of that I had to take a peek inside, how could I've do something like that?

*But there are times that happens, right? Back when we've been younger, we both were in the bath together, right?* That certainly had been true in the past, but as for my current little sister whom I hadn't seen in six years, there was definitely no way I could do something like that.

Hmph.

How was I supposed to deal with it at that time? I want to hear what all the other older brothers in the world would've done.

*Well, whatever. Even if there is a slight possibility that something happens, this isn't the time to dwell on things. For now I guess I'll call out from a distance——*

\*STOMPSTOMPSTOMP\*

Footsteps approached as I was thinking about calling out to her.

Quick-paced, irritated footsteps. From the direction of the bathroom.

"Onii-chan!"

\*SLAM\*

Opening the sliding door noisily, my sister walked into the living room.



“Just what do you think you’re doing?!”

“Er, what do you mean...?”

I froze up.

Well, of course I would.

A girl my age, having nothing but a bath towel on her, appeared in front of my eyes. I think anyone would've frozen up. Whether the person in question was your little sister or not, that didn't matter. Probably.

*...But, whoa.*

*What is this. Why's her skin so fair?*

*I mean, now that I've seen her this way, her figure really is amazing.*

Long legs. Slender waist. And yet her chest was full.

*I don't think she's wearing any underwear either... Shouldn't there be a limit to how good a girl can look like that?*

*Ah, I give up.*

*Gimme a break.*

"Um."

I said while I was averting my eyes awkwardly:

"Can you put on some clothes first?"

"Please don't change the subject!"

"Eeehhh?"

"I want to hear the reason!"

"Well, that's... Sorry, reason for what?"

My sister's eyes turned into triangles, looking very angry.

*I honestly don't get why she's mad like this.*

*What did I do?*

*From what I can see, something must've happened in the bathroom that caused this turn of events. I talked with a friend on the phone, then I sat here cross-legged drinking tea, that's all, right? I don't get why she's mad and viciously glaring at me for that.*

While stretching out her chest towards me, she said:

"I was in the bath, and yet why didn't you come to peep at me?!"

...

"Eh? What language's that?"

"I'm speaking Japanese of course!"

In addition to her eyes that were tensely raised at me, my sister was steadily looming over me.

*Um, excuse me?*

*Could you please stop to push your cleavage in my face?*

“Um... can you say that again? I think I didn't hear you right.”

“I was in the bath, and yet why didn't you come to peep at me is what I said!”

*It seems I didn't mishear.*

“Yes. I understood what you said. But Akiko...”

“What is it?”

“I think that goes against common sense, doesn't it?”

“Eeehhhh?!”

My sister bent back in an exaggerated way.

That kind of reaction made it look like I was the one in the wrong here... That wasn't right, was it? I had said the right thing, hadn't I?

“Look at this!”

My sister said, stroke her bare upper arm, and then continued:

“Not only is it spotless, my skin's also glistening! It's beautiful, right?!”

“Mm, yeah. Certainly, it is very beautiful.”

“That's true!”

Still angry, she nodded happily nonetheless, and continued:

“So that I can always look good for when Onii-chan sees me, I haven't neglected my skin care for a single day!”

“Ah, mm. Thanks?”

“I've put great efforts into it every day to make it look like this! Isn't that something to be proud of?!”

“Mm, well. You did put a lot of effort in it, huh?”

“Rather, shouldn't it be natural for you to want to attack me?!”

“No, there's no way something like that could happen.”

“Why not?!”

My sister looked as shocked as someone innocent who got judged guilty in court. As always, her vocabulary seemed to lack the word 'siblings'.

*I mean, now that I get a good look of her, isn't her hair still wet? All this time she was soaking in the bathtub, waiting for me to come... that's the kind of feeling I get. She was probably cheerfully humming to herself.*

*Now that I think about it, I kind of feel bad about it... No, no, no, calm down. Protect your common sense, the one at fault here's clearly her.*

*I've started thinking in weird ways, haven't I?*

*It was still daytime, and yet she said, 'I suddenly want to get in the bath', and hurriedly left her room. Then, when she was leaving her room, she looked at me with those glittering eyes. That was probably the reason for all of this. I hadn't noticed it back then.*

"Well, err, for now, calm down, Akiko. Why don't you drink some tea?"

"Please don't change the subject!"

"What, you don't want any? I even used some high quality green tea leaves for it and it's still hot, it was for your sake. Look, I thought that after getting out of the bath, your throat would be dry, right?"

"Thank you very much for letting me have this!"

My sister's expression changed completely and turned into a smile, drinking tea seemed like an important matter now.

Well, drinking a lot of tea is an easy way to cure bad temper, isn't it? She forgave me even while she was still wearing nothing but a bath towel.

"...Fuu. That was delicious. Thank you for the tea. Since Onii-chan's so good at brewing, this tea's flavor came out excellent, didn't it?"

"You're welcome."

"...Ahem. Well, with this tea I'll dismiss it, I shall close my eyes to your carelessness this time.

"Eh?"

*Carelessness?*

*Me?*

*This is how I'm being treated this time?*

*That's something new, isn't it?*

"With that said, I'm going to enter the bath once again."

*She's going to get in again?*

"This time I'm going to get in slowly."

"Mm. I see. That's good. You have to be careful with hot water, huh?"

"Yes. I'm deliberately entering it slowly, okay?"

"Mm. I don't really understand it, but enjoy yourself."



“Well then, I’m off. I’ll be taking plenty of time to deliberately enter it slowly, okay?”

With that said, my sister left the room.

*...She really likes baths, huh?*

*It’s probably that she didn’t get to wash her hair or body earlier. This time she’ll probably focus on that. Well, looking at girls who love to keep themselves clean makes you feel good, I warmly welcome it. Even if it’s my sister.*

*Now then, what do?*

*I’ve still got to finish up unpacking, and I got to put the materials for the transfer student lessons together.*

*Well, this is my long-awaited winter vacation. It won’t hurt to read a book while I drink my tea, I think I’ll kill some time.*

...

.....

.....

\*STOMPSTOMPSTOMP\*

“Onii-chan! Hey, Onii-chan!”

One hour later.

With especially loud footsteps, my sister leaped into the room with her face rapidly changing colors.

“Just what do you think you’re doing?!”

“No matter how long you stay in the bath, I’m not going to come and peek at you.”

“Isn’t that too much?! Even though I was trying so hard to give you a hint!”

“So you really did say that deliberately. Anyway, I’m absolutely not going to peek at you. Peeking at my sister in the bath, how could I do such a perverted thing?”

“In the eyes of love, it doesn’t matter whether you are a pervert or not!”

“In any case, it’s a no. No means no.”

“Grrrr. Onii-chan, you meanie!”

Meanie.

This had probably been the first time in all my life that I had heard that.

“Ahh, I won’t forgive you!”

With both her arms flailing around, my sister was sorely angry.

“If you’re like this, I won’t talk to Onii-chan anymore!”

“Mm.”

“Don’t give me such a half-hearted answer and stop reading your book!”

“Mm, mm.”

“I’m serious, you know?! I really *will* not talk to you anymore, you know?! Please reflect on your sins while you’re crying as your cute little sister’s ignoring you!”

\*SLAM\*

\*STOMPSTOMPSTOMP\*

While closing the sliding door shut with a slam, my sister ran back to the bathroom.

...Afterwards.

As promised, my sister didn’t talk to me.

At least for two hours.

Shortly after, she couldn’t bear anymore not to talk to me, approached me with teary eyes, and suggested we should reconcile, that’s how it was.

But after we had made up, my sister turned back into her noisy and cheerful self.

With the ‘reconciling’ over, she even managed to make us a luxurious dinner from our meager budget..

If I had to say it, well, she was certainly a cute.

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## Notes

1. Vibrating phone sound.

## March 28th: Fourth Day Living Together

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“Onii-chan, shouldn’t we go shopping?”

Afternoon, the next day.

My sister proposed that while we were both finishing up unpacking.

“Shopping?”

“Yes. I’ve been thinking about various things and—”

My sister said and went looking around in our respective bedrooms, living room, kitchen, and dining room, she then continued:

“As I thought, it seems we’re missing a lot of essential things. Why don’t we go look for a place around here and buy the things we need all at once?”

“Hm.”

We certainly hadn’t been well-prepared for the move. My sister and I had both left in a hurry, almost like a moonlight flit. We only brought the minimum of furniture and necessities with us.

In an emergency, anything we needed for now could easily be picked up at the neighboring supermarket. It’d surely be faster to get everything at once.

“Okay, got it. Well then, should we head out now?”

“Yes. Let’s go, let’s go.”

“But even so, I can’t afford anything too expensive, okay?”

“Yes, I know. We should try to save money wherever possible, right?”

Frankly, we didn’t have much at hand.

The Arisugawa and Takanomiya Families were both well off. They had taken my sister and me under their care. This time, however, as I hinted at earlier, we didn’t really get any financial help whatsoever.

And so the living expenses for my sister and me had been provided by someone else, namely from me and my hard earned savings. This was our fourth day living together and our savings were already... No, rather, the Himenokouji Family’s finances had been critical to begin with.

We’ve finally arrived.

We took the subway to a department store in the heart of the city... As if, it was just a somewhat big retail store in our neighborhood.

"That's a big store, isn't it?"

A four-story building with a parking garage that could accommodate nearly a thousand cars was in front of us. My sister raised her voice in admiration. She had been raised as a pure-hearted noble lady in those six years and probably wasn't in all too many stores like this.

By the way, currently my sister's outfit consisted of a coat that she was wearing over her school uniform. Economical and independence reasons were some of the main reasons for that. However, the most important one was that my sister had left most of her casual clothes at the Arisugawa house.

"...I'm sorry, Akiko."

"...? What is it?"

"Because I'm so useless, I can't even give you proper clothes."

"Ah. Do you mean this?"

She said and then opened her coat slightly to reveal the magnificent design of her uniform which combined both, old and modern elements.

"I really like to wear this coat. When I was with the Arisugawa family I've been wearing it all the time. It might not look like it, but it's very easy to move around in. Plus, I look good in it, don't I?"

*Well, that's true.*

The coat did look so amazingly good on her that it almost seemed as if it had been specifically designed for her.

But, you know... it was still a little...

If she hadn't left the Arisugawa Family to begin with, she would've had a life where she didn't have to go shopping like we currently were. That she didn't even have any decent clothes made me feel depressed after all.

"Please don't make that kind of face, Onii-chan."

In complete contrast to me, my sister had a bright and sunny smile on her face, she continued with:

"I don't need money or clothes. The most important thing for me is that I'm together with Onii-chan."

"That's some very pleasing thing you're saying there."

"Besides, isn't our current lifestyle truly amazing? For example, I really like the place we're currently living at, it has its own meaning and warmth to it. This is much better than when I was with the Arisugawa Family. Over there it was too spacious and I've always been surrounded by servants. In the first place, didn't Onii-chan bring up some money so that we could live together? I'm extremely thankful for that, I've no reasons to be resentful over anything."

"I see. Mm. I guess that's true."

"And since Onii-chan didn't receive any financial aid from the Takanomiya Family, how were you able to get that money? That's a question I've been wondering about for awhile. Onii-chan hasn't told me anything about it yet."

"Ahaha. Well you know, that's, uh..."

That was, well, a difficult topic.

It wasn't something I really wanted to be public, so I was trying to keep it a secret.

Ah, don't worry though, it wasn't anything illegal.

"Hmph. You're hiding something even though we're siblings. That's a grave matter. If you won't tell me no matter what, I fear I must ask the Arisugawa Family Intelligence to help with—"

"Hey, Akiko."

My sister was pondering over something unpleasant, I smiled at her and continued:

"I want to get along with you as much as possible. While that broken down dormitory is inconvenient at times, I think it's very modest and comforting... I really think that from the bottom of my heart. Because I love Akiko, you know?"

"It's obvious that you're trying to change the topic. Well, it's fine, though. When I hear those smooth words, it makes me smile easily. To be frank, hearing those words makes my mood lighten up."

"Is that so? Well, that's good then."

"After all these months and years, we're reunited. Let us two siblings live together in happiness from now on."

"Mm, mm."

"...Well, even though... if Onii-chan keeps up not laying his hands on me like he has been, perhaps I might just give up and return to the Arisugawa Family... okay?"

"Mm, mm. Well, if that's the case, I guess you need to pack your things then... okay?"

"I'm sorry, Onii-chan. Akiko got a little carried away."

"As long as you understand."

And like that we've arrived inside.

It was spring break and a Sunday on top of it, so needless to say it was also a day off for most people. Consequently, it was completely different from outside the store – crowded and muggy.

"So, what should we buy?"

Looking at the information board, I took out a notepad.

“Onii-chan, what’s that?”

“A shopping list. I already wrote down some of the things we need earlier. I asked a friend for advice.”

“Hm...?”

Her eyes narrowed, she continued to stare at the notepad intently.

From top to bottom, side to side, my sister seemed like a CT-scan while she was looking at the notebook, but then all of a sudden she started sniffing it.

“...Akiko?”

“Suspicious.”

She let out a sigh and continued:

“Onii-chan. What’s the name of your friend? What kind of relationship do you have with that person?”

“Eh?”

“Please answer honestly.”

“Err, there’s nothing for me to be dishonest about... The name’s Sawatari Ginbei Haruomi, my friend has a bit of an unusual name. We were already friends before I came here. My friend’s living alone because of circumstances, so I asked for advice on various things.”

“...Hmm? I see.”

My sister said that but still continued to stare at me intently.

“I guess a woman’s intuition can be off at times.”

She came to some conclusion on her own and said something I couldn’t quite comprehend.

*...What in the world is she going on about...*

“By the way, Onii-chan, what’s that over there?”

*And now she’s quickly changing the subject. Well, whatever, it’s fine.*

*Um let’s see...,* I directed my gaze to what my sister was looking at.

There was a salesperson with a red Happi<sup>i[1]</sup> coat who was shouting ‘Time sale!’ standing over there.

“Ah. Looks like there’s some kind of sale going on.”

“Sale?”

“It’s basically a bargain. A discount sale. They’re selling stuff cheaper than usual to attract more customers...”

“How much cheaper?”

My sister’s eyes started to sparkle.

“How much are they sellings things for?”

“Um, let’s see... they’re selling a ten pack of disposable hand warmers for 90% off.”

“90%?!”

She got even more excited.

“Calm down, Akiko. It may be 90% off, but they’re just disposable hand warmers, you know? It’s going to be spring soon as well, so this isn’t the time to be buying this, you know? To begin with, they’re holding this sale so they can get rid of redundant inventory——”

“By the way, Onii-chan, just what exactly is a hand warmer?”

She got excited without even knowing what it was. As expected from someone raised as a noble lady.

Ah, well. Here I say that, but I’ve also been raised in a wealthy family.

In any case after I gave her an explanation, my sister grew increasingly more interested.

“What an amazing thing. To think something so convenient exists... They didn’t tell me about things like that at all at the Arisugawa Family. ‘That’s used by commoners, it’s not something one of the Arisugawa Family should use’, they were probably thinking something like that. Judging it by appearance, right?”

“Well, probably.”

“Onii-chan, let’s buy that.”

“Wait, wait. We came here to buy necessities, didn’t we?”

“But, it’s selling for 90% below its usual price, isn’t it?”

“Even with that, we’re only saving about 100 yen at the most——”

“Is 100 yen not a big deal? Those who laugh at 100 yen will come crying for 100 yen.”

“That’s true, but still.”

*Hm.*

*She seems to be reacting extremely when it comes to prices being cheap. She probably learned that from the Arisugawa Family. That family always made money off of the stock market by buying low and selling high.*

*And well, it also seems like she wants to try something out she’s never done before.*

“Onii-chan, what’s your decision? If you don’t hurry up they might sell out.”

“I don’t think we have to worry about them selling out right away at this season, but...”



Well, okay, let's buy one. Just one set though, okay?"

"Yes! Well then, I'm going!"

"Will you be okay by yourself?"

"I'll be alright. I know enough to distinguish between a ten and a five yen coin."

*That makes me a bit nervous.*

"The one with a 'ten' carved on it is a ten yen coin, and even though they look similar, the one with a hole in it is a five yen coin. Having a hole in it means it's worth half, right?"

"..."

"Please don't look at me like that. It was just a joke."

"...Be careful, okay? Until just recently you were a pure-hearted person living a sheltered life, so I'm worried."

"I know there are ways to pay for things that don't involve a credit card. And that there's money that isn't paper currency. You don't need to worry about me."

"I'm a bit nervous."

"With that, I'm off!"

Ignoring my worries, my sister energetically ran off.

*Well, she needs to learn new things for a new lifestyle, and that's a good chance for her to gain experience. I guess this is what they call 'letting your child experience the world's harshness instead of pampering it'<sup>[2]</sup>.*

*But even so.*

*My sister really stands out.*

Long black hair, grey coat, and black tights.

Even though she was simply wearing her normal clothes, she was still giving off a strong impression. All the shoppers slowed down when they passed by my sister and admired her looks, it made me feel very proud as her older brother .

*Oh. She's standing in front of the sale corner now.*

*I can't hear the conversation between the shopkeeper and her, but she's probably saying something like, 'Give me one of those, please'. My sister was smiling without a worry on her face and the shopkeeper's face started to blush.*

*It's not hard to picture it.*

*She's a beautiful girl who'll never embarrass herself in public, that's if we ignore her bro-con tendencies.*

—*Oh. She's coming back.*

"I've returned."

"Mm. Welcome back."

"Look, I've bought them without any problems!"

"Mm, mm. That's good."

"Pat my head as a reward, please!"

"Why?"

"Is it okay if I use them right now then?"

"Ah. Hm. That's fine."

*Though if she uses them in the store right now, she'll get sweaty.*

*Well, it's fine.*

My sister took the hand warmer out of the bag and held it to her cheek, showing an expression of great delight. *I'll gladly spend the little I have for something like that if it makes her this happy. Even though I can't get her nice clothes, I can at least afford her disposable hand warmers.*

*Now then.*

*Now that she looks satisfied, time to continue our shopping——*

"Onii-chan, Onii-chan!"

She waved both her hands around with ferocious appeal.

"Look at this! It looks like another time sale's starting! It's mandarin oranges this time! Mandarin oranges, they have mandarin oranges! Ah, there's another one on the other side starting! They have detergent at such a price— Ah, there's more starting over here and over there! Let's go, Onii-chan!"

"...Uh."

"Hurry, hurry! If we don't hurry they'll sell out, you know?! They only have a limited stock!"

"Ah, whatever. I got it, I got it."

*Well.*

*I also like mandarin oranges and our stock of detergent's running low. Might as well queue up for the sale, can't hurt.*

*However, there are still other things we need to buy. Plus, we need several of those things right now.*

*So if my sister and I both stand in line, we're going to lose time.*

*Can't be helped. We'll have to split up for different lines so that we can get all the*

*stuff we need.*

"Hmm...? Onii-chan and I should separate into different lines?"

When my sister heard that, her face instantly changed into that of despair.

"I was finally able to go shopping with Onii-chan and now we have to separate? H-How can such an unreasonable thing be... But even though sales are going to start, there's still the possibility that it might end in the next ten minutes. Personally, I naturally want to stay together with Onii-chan, although it'd be regretful to ignore the price drop... But I want to be together with Onii-chan... ah, ah, ahh, aughhh, w-what should I do?! Just what in the world should I do?! Is there no way I can do both at once?! T-There has to be something——"

She looked like such a poor thing.

*Looks like she really likes sales, huh?.*

"Akiko."

"Y-Yes?"

"I've got a task for you. It's an extremely important one, you can't decline it."

"Important task...?"

"From now on, you're to separate into a different line. Then you're to get your hands on as many bargain goods as possible to help out the family budget."

"—!"

"I'm going to give you a budget, and you're to use that budget to complete this task... You understand, Akiko? That's not your objective alone, but mine as well. Even though I know it'll be painful to be separated... With all your knowledge of all sorts of things, I know you'll carry it out properly."

I handed her some money in one smooth movement and encouraged her.

"Understand? Let me repeat again, that's for my sake. You're not allowed to decline, okay?"

My sister accepted the money with a blank look on her face, and I felt a bit relieved.

"I don't want to be separated from Onii-chan, but... with this I'll be able to go to all the sales... And I'll be doing it for Onii-chan's sake..."

Before long, her eyes started to shine with understanding.

"I understand, Onii-chan. Akiko will do her best. For Onii-chan's sake I'll give it my best shot to take advantage of all the sales, so that the family finances will prosper."

"That's the spirit. When you're finished, let's meet up in the center of the plaza, okay? Well then, let's get going."

"I'm heading off then! Yahoo!"

*Why the yahoo?*

*She looked very happy though, huh?*

She did look as if her shoes had sprout wings while she dashed away. I was watching her leave from behind her with a wry smile.

*Well, up until now I haven't really done anything older-brother-like.*

*It's fine to spoil her at least that much, right?*



*Now then.*

*It's about time I get my shopping over with.*

*Even though I'm not as bad as my sister, I can't say that I'm that experienced with shopping either. My budget's limited, so I'll have to be careful.*

I took out the notepad once again and confirmed the contents of the list.

I started off by looking around in front of the information board.

*...Hm.*

*At any rate, this store's pretty big, isn't it? Feels like it's almost as big as the Tokyo Dome. It's split into a west and east wing, and the central plaza that I'm currently at... The furniture section's on the third floor in the east wing. I can find the daily necessities on the second floor in the west wing, huh? I know it has to be this big so that all these items can fit in, but it's bothersome nonetheless.*

*Well, whatever.*

*I'll just go tackle one task at a time.*

*Um, let's see, which way was the elevator——*

*...Huh?*

Shortly after I started to walk, I've already stopped in my tracks.

It was in the middle of the central plaza where I had planned to meet up with my sister later.

Normally there'd be a lot of people bustling around there, yet for some reason it seemed like there was an area devoid of people.

*What's going on?*

It looked like all the passerbies were looking at that empty space with their eyes wide open. Was there some kind of event going on...? No, it couldn't be that. Then again, it didn't seem like there was an argument going on either.

As it happened to be in the direction of the elevator, I naturally looked into that direction while walking.

I eventually found a gap in the crowd and was able to have a look at what was going on.

“Wow.”

...Unintentionally slipped out of my mouth.

The person in there was so incredibly pretty that she absolutely stood out.

It was a girl.

Probably about the same age I was.

However, she looked more mature than me.

And she had blonde hair.

She was a beautiful woman with thin, light, and wavy honey-colored hair that was styled in hanging twintails. She was just standing there, doing nothing.



*Is it a mannequin...?*

I thought that for a moment, but she must certainly have been a human being out of flesh and blood. If something like that were possible to be made, then humans would've crossed into God's domain a long time ago.

She was standing there silently... Or perhaps I should say that she was giving off an

icy aura... No, both of those are wrong. How should I put it, she simply had an emotionless expression. However, even that unsociable aura didn't detract from her beauty at all. This must've been a so-called 'cool beauty'.

*People like that actually exists.*

*But yeah, if she puts herself on display in such a conspicuous place, anyone would be charmed by her. Yet I also understand that no one's able to get close to her.*

*Now that I think about it, my sister's also giving off a similar impression. For today, it seems like this place has a random increase in beauty-appearance-rate.*

*Well, whatever.*

*This certainly is an astonishing encounter, but that's that. I need to finish up my shopping quickly. I still got so much I need to buy——*

*Wait, hold on, hold on.*

It seemed like the atmosphere around me was changing all of a sudden.

The aforementioned mannequin-like beauty came closer.

Seemingly into in my direction even... *Eh? Me? Why's she staring at me fiercely like that...* As I thought that, she walk towards me with quick steps.

"You."

She was now in front of me.

With the same cool and expressionless face she continued:

"Name?"

"Eh?"

"Let's hear it. Your name."

*Even with her splendid blond hair and blue eyes she doesn't seem like a pure caucasian. It feels like she has some Japanese features blended in.*

*Her height's about the same as my sister's and mine... Wait, now isn't the time for analyzing.*

"Name? Mine?"

"Yes."

She said and then stared at me. Directly, with the same facial expression.

*...What the heck?*

It was a mysterious feeling.

Just from how her expression looked one could think that she'd have a very oppressive and arrogant manner of speaking and the same counted for her behavior.



However, that wasn't the case. It was more like a 'that's simply the way this person is' kind of feeling one got from her.

So my mouth was hanging open from confusion.

"I'm Akito."

"Akito? That's your first name, isn't it? And your last name?"

"Um, Himenokouji."

"...I understand."

She said and then started to stare at me again.

"It must be my imagination, then. A woman's intuition is wrong on occasion, I guess?"

"Woman's intuition?"

*I've heard those that before somewhere.*

"Um, and? Just what in the world's your reason for calling me all of a sudden?"

"It's for no reason in particular. Only that I smelt something unpleasant coming from you."

"Eh? Me?"

"Yes. You."

"..."

*That's some crazy reason I just heard.*

*I mean, do I really smell that bad? I'm taking baths everyday and I've never had any strong body odor before... unless?! Could it be yesterday's dinner?! My sister's cooking's delicious, but she tends to use a lot of garlic. 'Eat a lot and replenish your stamina! Fufufu', she'd say. Even though I was already careful... Looks like I have to be even more careful...*

"The smell's probably just the garlic I had yesterday."

However, she just shook her head and said:

"It's simply a smell that seems to only affect me. Normal people can't notice it, so it's not any neglect on your part. Please don't worry about it."

"No, saying that makes me worry about it even more..."

Well, who wouldn't be worried when a complete stranger said, 'you smell'.

"Ah, well, I'm sorry. It's only natural that one'd be worried when someone said that. Please let me treat you to something as an apology."

"Eh? Ah, it's fine, don't worry about it."

Unexpectedly, I was forced to spend some time with this. And I wasn't someone who

had much time to spare in the first place.

*I'm a bit worried about leaving my sister by her own, I need to finish up my shopping as fast as possible and get to her——*

"It's a bit difficult for me to be standing here, to be honest."

The girl said.

"I'm attracting a lot of attention and I don't particularly have anything to do. Since you aren't taking me up on my offer for a meal, I'd be thankful if you let me accompany you for a while. Since you already came here to go shopping, there shouldn't be anything to be concerned about if I joined you."

"...Um. We haven't met before, right?"

"That seems to be the case. Although, for some unexplainable reason, I don't feel that way."

"...? Well, if it's difficult for you to be here, wouldn't it be better if you left the store?"

"That's a bit rude."

"...?"

Somehow I didn't really understand what this blonde beauty was talking about.

*Hm. What to do?*

*I mean, since I'm together with this striking person, it's starting to make me stand out as well. It really isn't comfortable at all to stand out like this... But I'd feel a little bad if I just flat out refused her after all...*

"I got it. Let's get away from here for now."

And so it turned into that.

Both of us started walking towards the second floor of the west wing on which the daily necessities were sold.

I didn't know whether I should've been surprised or what, but since she had been together with me, her bizarre behavior died down a bit. After we left the spot from earlier, the stares from everyone around us started to lessen as well. It was probably just like adding sugar to spicy cooking, it gets mild again.

"How mysterious."

She said. It seemed she held the same thoughts I did. Then she continued:

"Being together with you has gotten rid of that uncomfortable feeling from before. Perhaps it's because you're an extremely ordinary person who manages to not attract any attention at all. You act as a good cushion for my outstandingness. I give you my thanks for that."

"..."

*What the heck?*

*She was clearly thanking me, but why do I feel like something's gnawing at my heart?*

"By the way..."

I said while browsing the shelf for a power outlet.

"Why did you come here? Aren't you here to buy something?"

"That's not why I came."

"Why then?"

"You'd be surprised if you heard my reason."

"Eh? Well, you make me wanna know it even more. What is it?"

"I've got no particular reason."

"..."

Instead of surprised, I was more shocked.

She really did come to the middle of nowhere for no reason and then went to be at a loss what to do. Then she looked for help.

With that said, I took a closer look at her clothes.

It was simple red coat with a one-piece turtleneck underneath it. However, it looked as if it had been made of extremely high quality materials.

It probably wasn't something you could find at a store, but something custom-ordered. I lived with the Takonomiya Family, so I knew a little bit of stuff like that. You had to be from a rich family to even consider wearing clothes like those.

*To be honest, it stands out a lot in this store for common folk.*

*I really wonder why she came here.*

"Besides, there's something that piques my interest."

"Eh? What?"

"Are you a virgin?"

"...What?"

"The 'virgin' I'm talking about is pronounced 'cherry boy' in English. I don't mean the path you would take when going somewhere<sup>[3]</sup>."

"....Ah, route, huh?"

"So? I wonder, are you a virgin?"

"...Um, you don't want to know about the 'route I'd take when going somewhere', do

you?”

“No, I don’t.”

“...Why do you want to know that?”

“Am I not allowed to ask something like that?”

“No, normally you wouldn’t ask something like that. Don’t you have to be much closer to someone in order to ask that?”

“By the way, I’m a virgin.”

“What?! I didn’t want to know that!”

“You know something very personal about me now, don’t you? Since that’s the case, shouldn’t you tell me yours too?”

*What’s with her?!*

*We’ve only just met, and she’s already pushing extremely hard for something private as if she was some crazy salesman.*

“...Do you know about the right to remain silent?”

“Yes, of course. Are you perhaps going to use it?”

“If the need arises, then yes, I will.”

“But I don’t think you’ll do something like that.”

“Why?”

“I just have that kind of feeling.”

*Woman’s intuition again, huh?*

*However, that drives me mad.*

*Why is it that her intuition’s so spot on?*

*Now that I’m the only who knows something about her sexual experience, I should probably return the favor. I’d feel bad if I didn’t say anything. Even if she’s forcing me to blurt it out here.*

*Ah, I give up.*

*It’s useless...*

*Come to think of it, this girl’s been controlling the pace the entire time.*

“...n.”

“Eh? Sorry, I couldn’t hear very well. Could you please say it again?”

“—gin.”

"If you mumble like that, then I won't be able to understand you. Do you really plan to communicate like that?"

"VIRGIN! I'M A VIRGIN! How many times do you want me to say it?!"

"Eh? Sorry, I couldn't hear very well. Can you please say it again?"

"No, that's surely a lie, isn't it?! I said it totally clear just now, didn't I?"

"Yes, true. You let out such a loud voice that everyone around us is watching us now. Looking at the guy who just shouted out loud that he was a virgin."

"Ugh..."

"I see. You seem a little cute, blushing and trembling like that from your confession. Honestly, it arouses me greatly."

"Wha—"

*What's she blurting?!*

*Pervert?!*

*Could she be a pervert?!*

"Please don't make a face like that. It was just a joke."

"I-I see. A joke. No, well that may be true but that's still—"

"By the way I'm like an Amano<sup>jaku</sup><sup>[4]</sup>. So when I said that I was joking just now, it was actually a lie."

"...Can I leave now?"

"Sorry. That was a joke. This time it really was a joke."

"If that's the case, then it's fine..."

*Actually.*

*Amano<sup>jaku</sup>, doesn't she rather mean tsundere?*

*Or rather, tsundere's the modern version of the Amano<sup>jaku</sup>.*

*Well, whatever, it doesn't really matter what it's called. I'm a bit shaken up over this.*

"Well, the thing about Amano<sup>jaku</sup> was a lie, in reality I'm a very open and honest person."

"Which one is it now..."

"Sorry. I don't know the reason why, but I feel like retorting to everything you say. How very mysterious."

"That's what I should be saying..."

"At any rate, you do seem to smell after all."

“Why are you bringing that up again?! Or rather, do you have something against me for some reason?!”

“No, that’s not the case. Like I said just, for some reason I can’t resist retorting, opposing, and teasing you.”

“...Anyways, can you please give me a break. I mean, you were the one who wanted to accompany me to begin with, right? I don’t think it’d kill you to cut me some slack, would it?”

“That’s right. That makes sense. How mysterious.”

She said and then tilted her head.

Her face was as expressionless as ever.

Since she had said all those things earlier with that very same expression, it was actually frightening.

“To be honest...”

She looked at me while I was checking out the shelf and continued:

“This is actually my first time that I visited a place like this by myself. When I go out I usually have my bodyguard with me, but I went alone this time. That’s why I got startled once I became a lost lamb. Whilst I was lost by myself and shivering— you suddenly appeared. You were just like a savior.”

“...But it didn’t really have to be me, right? There were plenty of people around.”

“Yes, that’s true.”

“If I may, I’m simple and don’t stand out much.”

“Yes, that’s very true.”

“...About that, can’t you make it sound a little nicer? You said some harsh things about that earlier, didn’t you?”

“But you...”

She said, and then looked at me.

Those blue eyes of her seemed clear and with no malicious intent in them.

If anyone was being looked at like this, they naturally wouldn’t know how to react.

“You’re a simple person and you don’t stand out, but I think that’s charming.”

“...”

Ah.

*Really, what am I supposed to say here?*

*When she’s staring at me like this, it’s as if she could see right through me. It’s really creepy. Even though I know she’s just complimenting me.*

“Well, though that’s still flattery.”

“Wouldn’t it be better to just say it’s a compliment?!”

“Well, if I deceived you like this, then the nice person that you are definitely wouldn’t desert me, right?”

“...Well, that might true... But even if it is, you should keep it to yourself anyway...”

“I might not look like it, but I’m actually good at judging people.”

And with that, she changed the topic.

“Moreover, I’m extraordinarily good at athletics and academics. My senpai<sup>[5]</sup>’s trust me and my kouhai<sup>[6]</sup>’s adore me.”

“Huh.”

“While I’m at it, my nose is fair, my lips are slightly thin, and my eyes are incredibly refreshing. My three sizes are above average and I have a tall height. And my family... some various issues aside... nothing’s wrong with them.”

“Um, what are we talking about again?”

“Just my own appeal.”

“Huh.”

“I’m sorry. I apologize for making you feel uncomfortable. However, I—”

She said and stared at me again.

“—just want to be on good terms with you.”

“...If that’s the case, isn’t there a better way to achieve that?”

“That’s true. Surely there must be some other way.”

She said, averted her eyes, and murmured ‘How mysterious’ under her breath.

*I think your existence is much more mysterious.*

“It’s about time I left.”

“Eh?”

“Thank you for keeping me company, let us meet again some other day.”

She left me with those words and didn’t even wait for a reply.

She walked off with her coat waving, looking like a swallow which couldn’t wait for spring and flew off over the ocean.

I got the impression that she indeed was a beauty.

*But ‘let us meet again’? Now that I think about it, I never got her name.*

*Though, she was the one who came up to me asking for my name, in the first place.*



*And then she also said that I had that suspicious smell. From the start all the way up to the end I didn't get anything that girl was saying. But the most mysterious thing is, even though she did all that, I don't dislike her.*

*She said whatever she wanted to and kept teasing me. It's the strangest thing about that blond haired beauty.*

*...Wait, this isn't the time to idle around. I haven't gotten any shopping done. Like this I won't make it in time to meet with my sister—*

"Onii-chan?"

"Ah!"

I heard a voice calling out all of a sudden and turned around to see that familiar smiling face I was used seeing.

"What is it, Onii-chan? Are you still in the middle of shopping?"

"Y-Yeah. What about you?"

"I've finished buying everything I was told to. See? Please take a look."

With that said, she showed me her spoils of war.

Of course mandarin oranges and detergent were in there, along with sugar, soy sauce, garbage bags, towels, and many more items which piled up like a mountain inside her cart. I'm pretty sure that there had been goods in there that I had been in charge of buying as well.

It seemed like she knew how to use a cart though. Although I didn't really show her how to. Looks like my sister's capabilities had surpassed my expectations by far.

"But... didn't you buy a bit too much? Did I give you that much money?"

"It's all right. There's nothing in here that I had to pay for."

"Eh? Then you've got all that for free?"

"Yes. When I was talking with all the salespeople, they'd give me various freebies. Everyone was a really nice person."

*What the...*

*She's actually learned how to manipulate people.*

*Since she grew up in a sheltered life, I always thought that she had turned a little weak.*

*Anyway—*

"Akiko."

"Yes?"

"How'd you know where I was?"

“Even I can figure out something like that. This store is big, but I remembered all the things Onii-chan had to buy. Since I had finished up my shopping ahead of time, I decided to take a walk along the sales area and happened to stumble upon Onii-chan. That’s why.”

...Yes.

*She was really diligently, wasn’t she?*

Well, I certainly had come to the thought that ‘She has been raised to be a splendid young lady’ again and again when I had read letters from her, but everything she did just added further to that.

*Is it possible that I’m underestimating my sister?*

“In any case, Onii-chan, how much’s still left for you to buy?”

“Eh? Ah, um... to be honest, I haven’t bought a single thing yet.”

“Fufu. Onii-chan can’t do anything without me after all, huh? Let’s go, I’ll help you with the selection, so let’s finish up quickly.”

*Bah.*

*What is this?*

*I’m being treated like a kid.*

That said, my sister was giving me a look that hurt.

“No, no, Onii-chan. Please don’t think anything of it.”

She said and smiled.

“Even though it’s me myself who says this, but although I look like this, I’m actually a hard working person. I’m the secretary of the student council, my senpai’s trust me and my kouhai’s adore me, you know?”

“Hm.”

*I feel like I’ve heard that before.*

“I see. You’ve been a good girl even when we’ve been separated, huh, Akiko?”

“Yes. I want to be a sister that Onii-chan can be proud of.”

Yes.

That point was something I could certainly approve of.

“Good girl, good girl. You’re admirable, Akiko.”

“Ehehe. Praise me more, please.”

“Mm, mm. You’re very, very admirable.”

“Ehehe. Please pet my head more.”

“More? I don’t remember patting you in the first place.”

“Tsk, I was found out. I thought I could use the confusion as an opportunity.”

“Stop saying stupid things, let’s get going. We’re wasting too much time.”

I said, but then my sister made a weird face.

“It’s been on my mind for some time, but...”

“Eh? What?”

“There’s some kind of weird smell.”

“Eh?”

“It’s a kind of smell that makes me very uncomfortable. A weird smell that’s been coming from Onii-chan. What’s this... It kind of irritates me.”

*Shocking.*

*My self-declared bro-con sister tells me that I’ve got a smell that irritates her?*

“What’s going on here? It feels like a smell I should know... Yet my brain refuses to remember it...”

“I-Is it that bad? My smell?”

“Yes. It’s incredibly bad. You’ll defile the Himenokouji’s reputation beyond repair like this.”

“T-That much?! It’s that bad?!”

“Yes. That smell is clearly not one you should be spreading in public. It’s an urgent matter. We must do something about it as fast as possible.”

“W-What should I do then?!”

“Yes. There’s only one thing we can do.”

“And just what is that?!”

“Will you be able to do anything – no matter what it is?”

“I will!”

“A man doesn’t go back on his word, right?”

“I won’t!”

“Well then, I shall tell you what to do.”

She cleared her throat with a cough and continued:

“Please hug me right now. If you do it quickly, the unpleasant smell Onii-chan carries will be overwritten with his cute sister’s.”

“Well now, I should round up the shopping quickly and go home to take a bath.”

“Ah?! Please wait, Onii-chan! If you’re going to take a bath then let’s get soaked together——”

My foolish sister was saying something, but my ears didn’t listen.

*So. My shopping’s gotten stalled over and over again, I need to hurry and finish it now so I get home and take a rest from all those tiring things that have happened today.*

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### Notes

1. Coat worn at festivals and by certain store employees. See on [Wikipedia](#)
2. Japanese proverb. English equivalent is “Spare the rod and spoil the child”
3. *Wordplay*: ‘Doutei’ is virgin in Japanese. The kanji for ‘route’ can also be read ‘Doutei’.
4. *Amanojaku*: Amanojaku is a Japanese demon, which provokes a person’s darkest desires. [Click here](#) for more info.
5. Upperclassman/Seniors at school.
6. Underclassman/Juniors at school.

## March 31st: Seventh Day Living Together

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「Hahaha. I see, that's just too much.」

Upon hearing my story, my friend, Sawatari Ginbei Haruomi, burst into laughter.

「To think that you've been told the same thing twice in a day... What's up, Akito? Haven't you taken a bath with all the work from the move goin' on?」

“Don't even go there! I *do* bathe properly.”

「I know. You're a man who's careful to have just right amount of hygiene. Neither unclean nor next to a clean freak, just the right balance, I guess. And as far as I know, you didn't smell strong.」

*Tsk.*

*I know what you're trying to say, but I your voice's telling that you're making fun of me.*

「However, seems like an interestin' person that girl, doesn't she? The blond-haired young lady without a name. I'd like to have a look too.」

”Hmph. If it had been possible I'd've liked you there as well.”

「Hey, no need to feel down. We're just on a small island nation, but it's still pretty vast nonetheless, you know? Even Tokyo and Kyoto aren't close enough that travelin' as I want could be easy – and you're not planning to invite me over in the first place, do you?」

”Don't get too anxious. I'll invite you in due time even if you don't push me.”

「Such a relief. But you know, Akito, I think I need to come over right now.」

”Why's that?”

「The time right now's just too dangerous.」

“Dangerous? What do you mean?”

「The latent danger of you two siblings crossing the line's what I mean.」

”...”

A moment of silence later.

“...Oi, oi, Gin. Ginbei-san. Aren't you exaggerating here? My sister and I? Ha, no way.”

「That's why you're so cute, Akito. You understand, and yet you still put up that kinda tone. That kinda jokin' way, you use it 'cause you know there's a possibility, don't

you?]

“Uh...”

「There's no doubt that your sister sees you as a man. Her approaches are all direct and assertive, like an unstoppable runaway train.」

*I totally agree with that.*

「But you know, she might run wild, but she's not forgettin' about the brakes. If necessary, she could step on 'em and calm down.」

”Calm down? Although all those things happen?”

「She can do it. We talked about it the other day, right? If your sister was serious, she would've pushed you down long already. But the reason she didn't, is because she respects your own wishes, right?」

” ... ”

「Well, I'm not really sure how much control she has over herself. But I think she's a good girl that won't bonkers. Goin' by my gut feeling there's nothing to worry about.」

”I do agree that she's a good girl. But is that really enough to just leave it be?”

「No, no, there's no reason to worry about her. What we *should* worry about is you, Akito, right?」

”Hey, hey. You think I'll lay a hand on my sister? My blood-related sister?”

「I just think that you're a man.」

My friend answered the question with that.

「Everyone can tell from a glance that you're just an ordinary person. You look average and have average grades. Teachers must be in a bind when they're supposed to write a record about you. From one to five you'd be a three, you're not really motivated for extracurricular activities and in class you're easily forgotten. You're the very picture of an extraordinarily normal person.」

”Done yet? Well, it's true, though.”

「But a someone's worth can't just be measured by that all alone. To be honest, I used to look down on you... But after that incident I've changed my mind.」

”That's a bit exaggerated.”

「I was surprised when you moved and transferred. It hit me out of the blue. I didn't even know you had a little sister. You probably decided to go back and live with her long ago. You were slowly preparin' everything to finally reach your goal. No one else knew about it, only you. So you kept your little sister a secret. That was the right thing to do, of course. Keepin' your plan secret's the most basic of basics.」

“You're still exaggerating.”

「I've no idea how you managed to accomplish or even came up with that plan. It can

easily be called incredibly in-depth, yet it was boring and repetitive work. But you didn't rely on anyone else, to the point that you didn't speak to anyone. You completed your plan brilliantly while all by yourself. Magnificent.]

"I haven't done anything big. It's something anyone could do if they put their minds on it."

「You say it's somethin' anyone *could* do, but do you think it's somethin' anyone *would* do?」

"Err, well, that's..."

「Not even mentionin' how your opponents were the Arisugawa and Takonomiya Families. It's about time you recognized it. You've done somethin' incredibly difficult, no doubt about that. If not, would I keep praisin' you to the high heavens or do I look like I'm just fooling around?」

"..."

I slowly sank into silence due to either embarrassment or something else. I tried to scratch my cheek, but that couldn't stop the blushing. Guessing what was happening, my friend started to laugh on the phone and said:

「That's why I understand why your little sister feels how she feels. Anyone with a brother like that would be charmed. Even if they were blood-related.」

"...In any case, there's one thing I got now."

「That is?」

"It's pretty mean to make fun of me with such excessive praise, isn't it?"

「Hahaha, give up. That's the price of fame. If you've done something worth praising, you've gotta pay for it."

"There's a tax on that things? Who could pay all that? What an unfair tax."

「Anyway, another question I wanted to ask is...」

Trying not to laugh, Ginbei continued:

「What were your motives? One surely was your deep love for your sister.」

"Well, yeah. She's my dear sister after all."

「Akito, to be honest, here's what I think, just like your little sister with you, you see her as a woman.」

"Well, if I may be honest, Ginbei, you're overthinking. That absolutely impossible."

「Is that so?」

"Actually, I don't get why your faith in me stops here. You must be misunderstanding things at some point."

「It'd be good if that were so.」

"Anyway, isn't the evidence on all that stuff you keep saying about me pretty weak? Where do you get all this from?"

「Isn't that obvious? My intuition, of course.」

"Hey, hey."

*I've been hearing that often recently.*

「I'm just questionin' your motives because of my intuition. I'm usually spot on when it comes to noticing bad things like that, you know? So I'm really worried that you'll stray off the path and become a brute.」

"...Hey, Gin."

「What?」

"Could you— Could it be that you're mad at me?"

「Hahaha, isn't that obvious? You just realized that *now*?」

My friend burst into laughter and continued:

「At the very least I thought we were friends, I thought we were close. It might've been necessary, nevertheless you left without saying a word. That's standoffish and annoying, isn't it? Is that all I'm worth? I can't stop getting totally mad at that.」

"...Ah, sorry. I'm really sorry, really."

「It's fine. I already said it, but I know you didn't mean no harm. Nonetheless being angry and forgiving are two separate things. I *am* angry, but I've already forgiven you.」

"I see. Well, thank you, really."

「I said various harsh things, please don't take them too hard. I understand the situation now, guess I falsely accused you, didn't I? If you're thinkin' of me as a close friend, would you forgive me my temperament?」

"Well, if it's just that then I'd be happy to, but... is that okay? To be honest, I was expecting to receive a bunch of blows from you."

「I won't do somethin' that inefficient, so don't worry. Besides, just that wouldn't satisfy me.」

My friend showed a hint of suppressed laughter now.

「As a matter of fact, I've already had the chance to take some good revenge. No need for worry there.」

"...Hey, hey. You're not calm at all."

「I plan to return the emotional damage twofold. Prepare yourself.」

"What?! That's cruel! It's not like I wanted to keep it a secret from you, you know?! Anyway, since it had been those Families, it was necessary to move in secret... Since



you say to be my close friend, can't you understand the circumstances? You said you were going to forgive me, right? Being angry and forgiving were two things, you said, didn't you?"

「Forgiving and taking revenge are also two things.」

“That so? Somehow it sounds like you're trying to persuade me with your infamous rhetoric.”

「Please stop that false accusations, aren't *you* the one trying to persuade *me* with your own beliefs...? Well, no need to let out such an anxious voice yet. I said it's revenge, but it'll only be mischief. While you renew your relationship with your little sister, be patient and wait for that day to come.」



“Dammit. That Gin...”

I grumbled to myself after I had put the phone aside and been hung up upon.

*No need to worry, you say. If you're saying it like that, then I can do nothing but worry.*

*Wait. Could it be that it was your plan to make me worried from the start? Somehow it feels like that. You're probably enjoying imagining me splitting my head over that. You've got such a bright and cheery personality, and yet you love playing around and teasing me, that Ginbei...*

*But I guess now that you've spoken your mind about my sister and mine most recent slapstick act, you ended up taking the initiative and helping me out after all (like you already did with the shopping-list and such things).*

*I thought you weren't that angry with me and hence I felt relieved.*

*Not happening, huh?*

*You're mad after all.*

*Seems like you waited to calm down a bit and then let everything out on me at once, doesn't it?*

*I'm really, really grateful that you've taken the time to tell me your thoughts, but...*

*I should go and boost your mood soon, huh?*

*That cake you like so much shouldn't be missing either.*

*Well then.*

Spring break was gradually approaching its second half. Here and there cherry blossoms began to bloom, but it was still too early for a cherry blossom viewing.

Since I've tried being independent for the first time in my life, this spring had been the first one of this kind, but... oh dear, housework's a total pain, isn't it?

Cleaning, cooking, doing the laundry, and all other kinds of things.

Trying to count them was useless, it was an endless amount of duties over and over again.

The most essential things kept piling up one after another. Main reason was probably that I simply wasn't used to it, but nonetheless, I was totally busy.

However, back then I had wanted to make preparations for the move in advance.

At the time I already had a keen premonition that I putting things on hold would turn out horrible.

*Well, lamenting won't get me nowhere.*

*First of all, I'll finish some of the stuff at hand. Um, let's see, what's left?*

*I'm more or less done with cleaning, huh?*

*Today my sister's on cooking duty, so for now I'm leaving that aside.*

It wouldn't've been unlikely for me to get in her way with my clumsy hands, so my sister's cooking was basically better.

*If that's done, the laundry'd be left, huh?*

My sister always tried to take the initiative and do things, especially when it came to the laundry. I had noticed that she most of the time had already washed and even hung it out to dry.

Today our share of clothing had also been swaying in the garden under the spring sun. My sister had come home and went ahead to bring it back in—— Though it still hadn't been dry.

By the way, my sister said that the student council had some tasks to do today and was just about to leave.

Since we had been reunited, we had done everything together, so she said: 'I can't just leave Onii-chan all alone by himself!', 'Because, won't you be lonely?!', 'Mainly because I'm not here?!', stuff like that, and just before she left the house she was hesitating for a long time——

And now...

*\*dingdong\**

The bell rang.

*...I wonder who it is...*

*Even Ginbei hasn't been here so far, so there's no way it couldn't be a friend of mine. Not to mention a relative.*

*Could it be the neighbors? Or maybe solicitors...?*

"Yes, coming——"

Sure enough.

I opened the 'showa era'-like sliding door that contained frosted glass and standing there was...

"Yo. This the Arisugawa house or am I mistaken, eh?"

"...Excuse me?"

"Aah. Himenokouji now, aight? Mah bad, mah bad."

"...Aah— Yes."

How to put this...

Anyway, let's point out all of her features that could be seen at first glance.

First, red hair.

A ruby-like vivid redhead, the hair made up in a casual ponytail.

Next, an eyepatch.

A simple black, and as a result it looked like the One-Eyed Dragon Masamune's<sup>[1]</sup>, eyepatch covered her right eye.

But, a Japanese sword?

It consisted of simple craftsmanship, called Oodachi, and seemingly unfazed to carry around such a dangerous object, she grasped it with her left hand.

"Aah, 'tis here?"

She suddenly raised the hand that was holding the longsword, showed it to me, and said:

"Don't'cha worry. It's just a bamboo sword, ya know?"

"——Ah, it's just a fake, huh? Well, that makes sense. Nowadays, something blatant like this is banned by the weapons act<sup>[2]</sup>, it'd be nuts to carry around something like that so blatantly, right? If it's a bamboo sword then it should be fine."

"Well, it's a real sword called 'Bamboo Sword', ya see."

"Then it's absolutely out!"

"Hahaha. Now, now, don't'cha worry!"

Her chest was arched back and she laughed heartily as she said:

“Even I wouldn’t carelessly pull this guy out in town, ya know?”

“Well, that’s true, I guess, but…”

“I only pull it out to trim mah nails.”

“That’s way too carefree, also it’s discourteous to the katana, isn’t it?!”

“Hahaha. Yer reactions are excellent. I like ya.”

Rather…

From the very beginning there was one feature that stood out above all – I forgot to mention that.

She was wearing a uniform.

It held traditional and modern features – a splendidly designed uniform.

Naturally, I was familiar with those clothes.

I had already seen those today. It were the clothes my sister was wearing, I saw them every day.

“The name’s Nikaidou, first one’s Arashi. Third-year student and council president at St. Liliانا Academy. Ya could say I’m yer sister’s boss. Pleased to meet’cha, Himenokouji Akito.”



“Ya and yer sister don’t resemble each other too much, eh?”

She said, put the katana beside her, and sat down with one knee raised.

The above had been the very first thing that self-claimed student council president had said after her introduction.

“Ya look average and yer grades ain’t anythin’ spectacular either, that’s what I’ve heard. Are ya the kind of person that gets their nutrients sucked out by their little sister?”

“Err, well, if I may, isn’t that a bit reprehensible for our first meeting?”

We faced each other from across the tea table.

Near the both of us were two Shigaraki<sup>[3]</sup> tea cups with steam rising from them.

“Ah, don’t take it to heart, aight? I didn’t mean any harm, ya know? It’s just mah nature to be direct.”

“Even when it’s the first meeting?”

“Of course this doesn’t apply to everyone. Whatever, yer Arisugawa… Himenokouji Akiko’s older brother, so in my eyes yer just like family to me. So how yer bein’

disrespectful to a family member, that's even more rude, don't'cha think?"

"Haa?"

*How should I say it?*

*Since earlier something's been bothering me and I just can't shake it off.*

"Um, Nikaidou-san, was it?"

"Oh? What'cha want?"

"Um... Concerning *that*, is it okay for you to talk about it? Or would you rather not?"

Eyepatch.

And then the Japanese sword.

Normally, turning a blind eye to them would be the best thing to do. However, she was my sister's superior and moreover the student council president of the school I was planning to attend. I had to ask for the reason behind it.

"Haha. I see."

Nikaidou-san laughed with a broad grin and continued:

"In other words, yer someone who gets aroused by eyepatches 'n Jap swords, eh?"

"...What?"

"Mah bad, mah bad, I ain't never met someone with that kinda peculiar taste. If I would've known that, I'd have tried to be a li'l bit more careful... Sorry, I gotcha hard for no reason. But it's 'kay, I won't let it happen again."

"Please don't just think stuff up. I mean, how could you even get to that kind of conclusion?"

"It's 'kay, I'll take responsibility. If yer interested, I ain't mindin' givin' ya this eyepatch 'n Jap sword so ya can get off. Ya must've collected quite a bit with yer endurin', haven't'cha? It ain't good for yer body to hold it in, ya know?"

"No, please listen to me..."

"Hahaha, it was just a joke, a joke."

The student council president's voice bursted into laughed.

*Seriously, please stop telling that ugly jokes. Talking dirty things is just too much.*

*...Well.*

*I'm fine, for now at least.*

*'I don't want to talk about that', she probably tried to tell me that in a roundabout way. As for me, not having to 'turn a blind eye to it' is plenty, I'm more curious about something else than the eyepatch and Japanese sword anyway.*

“Um, there’s one more thing.”

“Oh. What’cha want?”

“There’s something I’m also curious about.”

“Hm?”

“I’m not really sure how to say it.”

“Don’t’cha be so reserved. Already told’cha, yer like family to me. If there’s anythin’ ya wanna say, then just spit it out like a man.”

“Ah, thanks. Well, then I’ll just say it.”

“Oh? C’mon, out with it.”

I cleared my throat with a cough, averted my eyes, and with a sinking feeling said:

“I can see them. I’ve been able to see everything for a while now. Inside your skirt.”

Yes.

It had already happened, such a pure thing. I had seen it all.

That area I was hesitating to talk about was covered in thick red tights.

It had been possible because she was sitting in full view in front of me with one of her knees raised. It had already been past a peek, it had been inevitable to see.

“Hahaha. Gotcha, gotcha, ya can see, eh? Guess that’s true.”

However.

Nikaidou Arashi laughed heartily and continued:

“Well, don’t sweat it, I don’t mind.”

“Even if you don’t, I do. I don’t know where to turn my eyes to!”

“By the way, today’s are red.”

“That so? Well, no surprise then. Even when I said I could see them, to be honest, all I could see was red. I thought no matter how deep the color of the tights was, it would’ve been strange to not be able to see the color of the underwear through them. But I get it now, if that’s the case then it’s obvious. If they were spats or something, then it wouldn’t be that embarrassing—— Hey! That’s not what I was trying to say there!”

“I was lyin’, truth is, I’m not wearin’ any.”

“I see, so that’s it. So you’re using a high tier strategy as daring as to wear deep colored tights to cover up the fact that you’re not wearing any—— As if! If that was true, wouldn’t it be even worse?! Please stop spreading your legs like that!”

“Hahaha. That’s a good reaction ya showin’.”

She said and let out another hearty laugh.

How to put it? She really enjoyed laughing.

“Yer sister’s lackin’ that kinda responses. It’s somethin’ precious, ya know?”

“Ah, that so?”

“Ye, it is. Arisugawa— Oh, it’s Himenokouji now, huh? Well, either’ll do.”

“Huh?”

“Anyways, my cute kouhai – I mean the secretary of the student council, ya know? She’s too serious, so no matter what, she always sticks to the rules. She’s really capable, so it’s a good thing, but it’s no good bein’ so stubborn. But when it comes to her off-the-chart bro-con-ing, she tosses everythin’ away and just goes wild, I really don’t get her.”

“Um, about that.”

The moment my sister was brought up, I finally remembered something I wanted to ask.

“So, what kind of business led you here today? My sister said the student council had some kind of work to do and headed out.”

“Well, ye, that’s right. I’m the one who told her that.”

She said and gave off a satisfied smile.

*...What am I supposed to say to her?*

*She said that she was a third-year student, so her age shouldn’t be too far from mine. She doesn’t look very lady-like, but if I had to pinpoint, she somehow has an extremely important air to her. Yeah. Rather than a woman, she’s more like a ronin from the end of the Edo era. Plus, she looks as if she’d become an elder statesman of the Meiji era after that. Thinking about it, the way she wears that splendid ponytail is kind of reminiscent of a top-bun<sup>[4]</sup>.*

“Um... I’d hate to be mistaken, but...”

“What’cha want? Just say it already.”

“From what Nikaidou-san just said it almost sounds as if you gave my sister some work so that you could be alone with me in here...”

“It’s not ‘almost’, that’s exactly the case. Himenokouji Akito, I wanted to talk with ya alone, ya know? So I had yer little sister step out for a bit.”

“Huh. With me?”

“Ye. With ya.”

In contrast to the broadly grinning Nikaidou-san, I was nothing but bewildered.

“And, what do you need me for?”

“Whaaat? It’s nothin’ to make a big deal outta.”

She said and alternated the way she was crossing her legs.

During which various places were revealed and so I averted my eyes feeling awkward.

With what came next, whether I wanted it or not, my gaze went back to her...

“Why don’t’cha become my man?”

“...Huh?”

“Why don’t’cha become my man?”

“Ah, no. I heard you perfectly fine. There was no need to repeat.”

“Oh? Well, sorry ‘bout that then. So? What’s yer answer?”

“...Um. Are you seriously asking?”

“Nope. It was a joke.”

“I’m relieved hearing that.”

“About 10%, ya know.”

“So the remaining 90% were serious? I’m even more anxious hearing that.”

“Hahaha. That was a joke, too.”

“Really... Please don’t scare me like that.”

“Becoming my man was a joke. Why don’t’cha become mah cub<sup>[5]</sup>?”

“Saying that doesn’t make it better!”

*Or rather, didn’t my ranking actually go down?!*

“Hahaha. No, no, it’s a joke, a joke. Yer reactions are interestin’, I couldn’t help but teasin’ ya a bit. Mah bad.”

“Please give me a break... I frighten easily.”

“Well, please don’t think anythin’ bad of it, aight? But, ya know, if ya ever want to become mah cub, yer always welcome to. I’ll give ya a good time, alright?”

“No, thank you.”

“Eh, how come? Ain’t that kinda boring? Sayin’ it myself might be a bit much but I’m actually a good woman, ya know?”

“Anyway, no, thank you.”

“But let’s say ya were in that kinda intimate relationship with me...”

She said and leaned forward.



All the while she stuck to her usual grin.

It seemed like she was peering into the depths of my heart.

“Wouldn’t it stop somethin’ like two siblings in a naughty relationship from ever happenin’?”

“...”

It was then that the alarm in my head finally went off.

Perhaps I had become a bit too relaxed.

Just from a word or two we had exchanged in our conversation it was immediately clear. ‘This person’s not ordinary’, that’s what I thought.

This woman intentionally came to seek me out. She tricked my sister into going somewhere far off. This was no simple house visit.

“I see.”

Nikaidou-san muttered after a short period of silence.

She still wore her broad grin. However, that dangerous feeling I had glimpsed at had vanished.

“The atmosphere changed for a sec there, eh? Thin ‘n light, but the sharpness was first class – kinda like when a good sword’s unsheathed. Yer a good man, eh? I kinda understand why Himenokouji’s smitten with ya now.”

“Huh?”

*‘A good man’, she said.*

*Well, I’m happy being praised like that.*

*But she’s saying that to someone she only just met an hour ago, I don’t think anyone could get a person in that time.*

“Ya don’t understand, do ya?”

While chuckling, she continued:

“What do ya think are good points for a woman to like someone?”

“Um... Don’t know?”

“She should be able to see a good man in him.”

“Ah, I see.”

“How doesn’t matter. It’s fine if she’s been goin’ out with him for a long time, or carefully observed him, or even if it’s just her intuition – all’s fine. Anyways, she has to make sure to sort out da fakes and catch the ones that are the real deal. That’s the first rule for women.”

“I see, I see.”

“There’s one more. Once she finds da surely good one, she must know how to capture him. It’s no good if she doesn’t know how. If she’s finally da good one after all da work, there’d be no point if she ain’t got her fingers on him. That kinda thing’s the same as a pie in the sky.”

“I see. Seems reasonable.”

“No matter what’s inside or outside. A good woman has to just satisfy da two conditions. ‘N I can do that. On top of that, Imma knockout beauty.”

“You’d be even better if you weren’t tooting your own horn like that.”

*Well.*

*Leaving whether that’s true or not aside, that certainly was some persuasive speech. With that I got her a bit, but...*

“Um, and? What’s that to do with anything?”

“Yer a good man, but yer really dim, ya know.”

“Well, sorry.”

“In other words, the good woman, that I am, has gotten ya down. Himenokouji Akito, yer an extraordinary good man. There’s no problem that we ain’t met before. Anyone with a workin’ nose could immediately sniff it out. That yer a worthy man, that is.”

The student council president said and then in one go pulled herself closer to me.

Even though there was a tea table between us, somehow I got the impression that we were actually a lot closer. What a mysterious presence.

“Ya know, with ya it’s like that... Though it looks like yer just thin on the outside, inside there’s actually a big heart. Once somethin’s decided for ya, ya’ll absolutely see it through, and yet if required, yer also able to show a bit of flexibility. Becomin’ yer enemy’s the worst thing possible, but there’s no one more reliable if yer a friend – that’s the kinda person ya are.”

“Ah...”

“Have more confidence in yerself. Be proud of yerself. Yer an extraordinarily good man. I, Nikaidou Arashi, guarantee it. If ya like, I could swear on the Bamboo Sword.”



“Strange. Once you bring up the name of your sword, the persuasiveness of your words dissolves into nothingness.”

I said, but on the inside I was truly happy nonetheless.

*She’s a good motivator, huh? Well, it was all just flattery, but had I been careless, I’d’ve taken it for granted. Moreover, her way to evaluate people’s more that of a hero*

*than a woman. I kinda understand why she's the student council president——*

*Hm?*

*Come to think of it, there's...*

"Um."

"What'cha want?"

"Could it be that you're trying to seduce me?"

"Hahaha. Yer a quick one, aren't'cha?"

Nikaidou-san slapped her thighs as she laughed.

"Sorry, sorry. It's just that I've seen a good one, ya know? Wouldn't thought ya could get my seducing already... And? What'cha thinkin'? Were ya seduced a bit? How 'bout becomin' my man after all?"

"I humbly decline."

"It's about time I told ya the truth, huh?"

And with that, her expression changed.

Keeping her wide grin, that dangerous feeling from before resurfaced.

"A few days ago, I actually met up with the Arisugawa and Takonomiya Families."

"———?!"

"Whoops. No need to panic."

She lightly waved her hand and continued:

"They didn't ask anythin' concrete. All they said was the normal 'please take care of 'em' 'n stuff, but... The Arisugawa and Takanomiya Families aren't dumb, they wouldn't visit just for that. I think ya got it this far."

"Yes, I understand perfectly."

If not I wouldn't have been suffering that much at that moment.

"Well, ya really shouldn't worry too much. I ain't thinkin' 'bout doin' anything. Just like I said, they didn't request anythin' concrete of me. So I already have some relations with the Arisugawa and Takanomiya Families. Not that I'm really owin' 'em favors or anythin', it's more or less mah duties."

"In other words, if the situation arose, you'd take their side, right?"

"I think it'd be good if things didn't come to that."

"I also feel the same way."

"But I don't really think things will turn out like that. I like Akiko and I ya a lot too. Compared to mah duty, I'd rate ya two higher. But, ya know, that's just the way life is,

ya ain't knowin' hot it'll turn out."

"I guess so. Actually, no, it's exactly like that."

"Well, if ya were to become mah sex slave, then it'd be a whole different story. Duty and human nature aside, all I'd think about would be protectin' ya."

"Neither a lover nor a cub, but now I'm a sex slave? My value just keeps dropping, doesn't it? And yet you were praising me a while ago."

"If you'd like, I wouldn't mind becomin' yer sex slave instead, ya know."

"Eh?!"

"Oh? I've piqued yer interest, didn't I? That more yer taste?"

"No way!"

"Well then, can I borrow yer shower for a bit?"

"Don't just carry on as if I'd accepted that!"

"Hahaha. Mah, mah, yer really interestin', aren't'cha?"

Nikaido-san slapped her thigh and then let out another hearty laugh.

"Well, no need to worry. Even if they're the Arisugawa and Takanomiya Families, they've no reason to take yet. For now, it'd be good if ya siblings lived carefree 'n made up for dem lost six years. I'll assist ya guys as much as I can, aight?"



With that, the handsome student council president excused herself.

And just like her name suggested, she had been like a storm<sup>[6]</sup>.

She suddenly appeared, dragged me all over the place, and as soon as she was finished, quickly left.

If she wasn't a storm, then she must have been some kind of Toorima<sup>[7]</sup>.

*Oh dear, she's really left an impression on me.*

*Now all that's left to do is to figure what she was trying to tell me.*

*Well, for now I can probably take her words for what they are.*

That's what I thought.

She probably wouldn't tell any lies.

If necessary, she'd be able to come up with as many lies as she wanted to, but this time she had no reason to, probably.

On top of that, I didn't get the feeling that she was trying to hide something.

She probably came to gain my trust – In other words, she showed off her trustworthiness to me, that had been her reason to come in the first place.

‘It’s the worst to be your enemy, but you’re the best as a friend.’

Nikaido-san seemed to have judged me like that.

*Man, look who’s talking*, was what I thought.

I didn’t want to make Nikaidou Arashi my enemy even in the slightest bit. If there was even the slightest possibility of that happening, I wouldn’t hesitate to use everything at hand to get rid of that possibility.

However...

*‘If ya ain’t wanna become mah enemy then why don’t’cha be my sex slave?’, huh? That might be beyond me, though.*

*I’m sure there are many men out there who’d gladly give in and fall into her trap. Speech and manners aside, she really does look like a famous fashion model. If there’s anyone masochistic enough, they’d definitely fall for her.*

*Ah, wait. Of course I’m not one of those, alright?! I’ve got no such hobbies, okay?!*

*—I’m serious, I’m not making up excuses here, alright?*

*My sister isn’t here yet, so I’ve to finish up the remaining housework myself, I guess.*

*After I’m done with the chores, I got to prepare for the lessons. Once that’s all done, I can get back my job that suffered due to it all...*

*Oh man.*

*The tasks just keep piling up.*

*Um, what to do first...*

*The cleaning’s mostly done. So next—*

*Oh.*

*Shouldn’t the laundry be dry by now?*

*“Oh~ oh~ It’s dry~ It’s dry~”*

I took a look inside the garden and saw that the already dried laundry faintly swayed in the wind.

For some strange reason it lightened me up, so I took down the laundry humming to myself.

*Well then, now that that’s done, I guess I should prepare the lessons. School’s starting soon, there’s not much time left. I got to be diligent and get this over with as soon as possible—*

*“FUGYAAA/*

Just then I heard an incredible voice.

*What's that? Some cats in heat having a fight?!*

I thought and turned around.

“O-O-O-Onii-chan...?!”

It was my very own sister who had just returned from school.

“Hey now, Akiko. What's with that noise? It'd be embarrassing if the neighbors heard that. Please be more lady-like.”

“W-What do you think you're doing...?”

“What are you saying? I'm just taking down the laundry.”

“Onii-chan, what's that in your hands...?”

“Eh? What, those are your panties, aren't they?”

“———!”

Her face blushed hard all of a sudden.

She approached me with huge, stomping steps.

Then she snatched away the panties I was holding (along with the rest of the laundry that I had taken down).

After that, she quickly took three steps back.



...Last, she glared at me and let out a low growl.

“...What kind of animal are you? Please get a hold of yourself.”

“How could I be calm?! M-M-M-My u-underwear was...”

“What? Shouldn’t something like that be nothing to you?”



“How could such a thing not have any effect on me?!”

“And yet you got mad at me for not peeping in the bath? And to top it off you appeared in front of me with nothing but a bath towel on you!”

“Surprise attacks such as this aren’t allowed!”

“I didn’t really think anything of it, you know? It’s just my little sister’s underwear.”

“Hearing that makes me angry for another reason now!”

*Jeez, what’s with her? I don’t get it.*

*I just don’t get where she’s drawing the line.*

“...Fuu-haa, fuu-haa.”

While I remained silent and expressionless, my sister pressed her hand to her chest and started taking in deep breaths.

Before long, her cherry-blossom-colored cheeks slowly returned back to their normal color, she then glared into my direction.

“Even if it’s by the Onii-chan I love dearly, I can’t possibly forgive the violence and abusive words over and over again!”

“...Did I say something to deserve that?”

“This is a maiden’s underwear, you know?! Those belong to your cute little sister, me! If you wanted to smell them, then I’d have gladly let you, but to handle them like they were just some kind of rag— Ah, I can’t forgive you after all! Onii-chan’s excessive attitude hurt my fragile heart deeply!”

“Calm down. Out of 100 people, 100’d probably say your answer’s absurd.”

“This has nothing to do with the rest of the world! In the Himenokouji household, there are rules! Onii-chan’s obviously in violation of those!”

“Hm.”

*Where did these kinds of rules come from? ...Guess I shouldn’t be thinking about that right now.*

*I don’t think I’m in the wrong here, but seeing how my sister told me off, I guess my foresight’s a bit lacking. That aside, it doesn’t look like my sister’ll settle down all too soon...*

“...I don’t really get it, but I see your point. There certainly must be manners, even between good friends. Sorry that I did how I pleased and took down the laundry.”

“Have you reflected upon yourself?”

“Mhm.”

“Really?”

“Of course.”

“I understand. Well then, I’ll forgive today’s actions. In exchange I think—”

“By the way, Akiko.”

“Yes?”

“I know it’s impossible, but were you possibly thinking to ask me to ‘please embrace me’ in the confusion of the moment?”

“...”

“Akiko?”

“Onii-chan. Don’t you think you’re exaggerating?”

“Eh?”

“That you thought something like that... I’m truly shocked. It shocks me even more than when you touched my underwear however you wanted. How could I do something unreasonable as taking advantage of Onii-chan while he’s in such a disadvantageous situation and ask an unreasonable demand?”

“Mhm... I see. Sorry, my bad. Seems like I overdid it.”

“That’s exactly right, Onii-chan. Please be careful in the future with what you say.”

“Sorry, sorry.”

“Really, there should be a limit to all those false accusations that you’re placing on me. My demand is simply to have Onii-chan’s lips touch mine for just a brief moment, just something simple and modest to—”

“Akiko.”

“Yes.”

“I’m glad. If you were serious about that, then I’d have to cut our connections.”

“N-No way, that’s...”

“Then this conversation’s already over, okay? Yup, okay, we’ve reconciled.”

“W-Wait, please! This kind of chance doesn’t come often— Wait, I won’t accept that you’re not giving me a token of your apology!”

“It’s no use.”

“If a kiss is out of question, then please embrace me!”

“So you went there after all.”

“Rub my head at least!”

“Nope.”

“W-Well then, at least do... Um, um...”

“Ah! By the way, Akiko.”

It looked like things were going the usual way, so I had to change the topic quickly.

“You’re in the student council, aren’t you? You’re the secretary, right?”

“What?! Please don’t try to blatantly change the topic like that! Today’s the day that I’ll surely receive my reward, okay?! If not I won’t move an inch from here! I’ll neither do cooking nor cleaning!”

“Well, Akiko’s really an admirable person, isn’t she?”

“Eh?”

“You’ve joined the student council to help your school. That alone’d be enough and yet, even though it’s your day off, you gave it up and did some work for the student council. That’s not something anyone would readily do. Well, I for one really think it’s something admirable.”

“I-Is that so...”

“That’s right. You’re a very capable person. I’m very proud of my sister.”

“P-Praise me more, please.”

“Akiko’s so splendid. There’s not a second person in the world like you, there could never be anyone to replace you, my magnificent sister.”

“Ehehe... I-I understand, saying that is fine. Well then, you know, shouldn’t you give that cute little sister of yours, me, you know, some kind of reward—”

“Because you’re my magnificent sister, you wouldn’t do anything that’d trouble Onii-chan, right?”

“Eh? Um, that’s...”

“But really. I must be blessed to have a good girl like this as my little sister. I just can’t thank God enough for my luck. Oh my, what good fortune I have.”

“...Um you know, Onii-chan. Regarding your cute little sister, wouldn’t it be good to, maybe, give some kind of reward to me as a—”

“Ah, by the way.”

*Well then.*

*I should change the topic once more around here, so that I can finally get over with this unsettled one here. If I can do that my goal will be accomplished.*

*Um, next topic should be... Ah, I know.*

“The student council president, what kind of person’s that?”

“Eh?”

“St. Liliانا Academy’s. That person’s your boss, right? ‘What kind of person is that?’,

was what I was thinking.”

‘Keep this a secret from yer sister, aight? It’d cause problems if she found out.’, Nikaidou-san had asked of me as she left. I had to keep her visit a secret.

“For me, the president’s someone I’m entrusting you to. As your elder brother, I wish to know what kind of person I’m doing this to.”

“I see. I understand now.”

*...Is it just my imagination or...?*

My sister nodded and her way of speaking suddenly got very formal. Part of her back had straightened up firmly.

“The president is a person worth your respect. She’s proficient at grasping a human being’s nature and skillful in how to make the best use of someone. It’s not just talk either, she *is* capable. And when a dire situation arises she can be relied on. She’s also sociable and kind, and has a lot of friends because of that. I think that here independent leader personality’s not very commonplace. I’d perhaps say that the president was born to be a heroic person.”

*Hmm.*

*It’s unusual for her to say such things.*

“However, the president’s sexual dispositions are the worst.”

*There we go...*

“That person’s interest in men and women is terrible.”

*She swings both ways, huh?*

“By the way, she’s nicknamed ‘predator’.”

*What?*

*That’s too sudden.*

“Onii-chan. Now’s a good chance, so let me give you a word of advice.”

Without hesitating, my sister brought her face closer to me.

She raised her index finger and said with that serious facial expression:

“Please don’t get close to the student council president Nikaido Arashi-san.”

“W-Why?”

“It’s for Onii-chan’s sake, that’s for the better.”

“But you know, that person’s the one who’s been looking after you. Shouldn’t I at least have some manners and introduce myself?”

“You’re certainly right. But this time you should just leave it alone.”

"But you know, this spring I'm going to attend the same school as you. How will I go about if I met her face to face then? The student council president."

"I'm well-aware of that, but above all else I must warn you once more, please don't get close to her as much as you can."

"Mm. Is she that dangerous?"

"Her second name 'predator' isn't just for show. Of course talking to her's out of question, but please avoid eye contact too, okay? You might get pregnant if you don't."

"Ehhh?"

"It doesn't matter if you're man or woman. The president's just like that."

"I-Is it really that bad...?"

"Yes. If that person saw Onii-chan and decided that he was delicious, there's no doubt that she'd bite and swallow you whole on the spot. Of course, as long as I'm by your side, I'll try to stop anything like that from happening, but... Anyway, my duty'll be to protect Onii-chan's chastity. I beg you, please listen to what I say and make sure you don't get anywhere near her. Okay?"

...*Well.*

It had already been too late. Unfortunately, I already had some relationship with the student council president.

And on top of that, I've had had a hunch since earlier that this undesirable yet uncuttable relationship wasn't going to disappear.

*Well, silence is golden in this situation, right? Must be.*

"Ah... It's really the ultimate happiness that I can go to the same school as Onii-chan. Even though it makes me anxious that I mustn't let you get closer than 50 meter to the student council president... Ah, but there's one more person who I don't want you to meet even more than that... However, the dangerousness of that person doesn't compare to the president's..."

"Well, you don't have to worry so much, Akiko. I'm not a child, you know? Even if the president posed some danger, I've got at least the power to protect myself from her."

"Naive! Onii-chan's too naive! Onii-chan doesn't know how dreadful a person she can be, so you're able to be that carefree!"

"Even if you say that... We're attending the same school, so it's unavoidable that something will happen, right?"

"That might be true, but please be more aware of yourself! Inside that school there's a dreadful predator and Onii-chan is its pitiful prey! If it's Onii-chan, then that person will snatch you up in the blink of the eye and there'll be nothing but 'CHOMP', 'CRUNCHCRUNCH', and then a 'GULP'!"

“I get it, I get it. I’ll make sure to be really careful, okay?”

“...Wahh, I’m feeling uneasy already. Too uneasy. Even if Onii-chan’s careful, if she comes out and sets her sights on you, Onii-chan will be like a rabbit eyed by a hawk... Ahh, now that it’s come to this, it’d be best if I feasted on Onii-chan before she can! With that said, Onii-chan, this evening you and I——”

“You’re the most dreadful predator to me. It’s about time you noticed that!”

“Please don’t say that! At least let me sleep in the same futon as you!”

“No. It’s about time for you to go prepare dinner. I’ll be busy preparing for my lessons.”

“Please do something about it! Just let both of our futons lie next to each other then!”

“Ah, that’s right. It’s about time I tend to the yard.”

“Just lined up! Really, only just lined up! You surely could at least do something like that! That’s all, seriously!”

“Since I’ve moved here, I’ve really let it go. Before my lessons I should work on the yard first.”

“O-Onii-chan’s ignoring me! How cruel! That’s a serious case of domestic violence! If you continue abusing your cute little sister that way, sooner or later you’ll be standing in court! Are you fine with that?!”

“Hey, Akiko. Where’s the broom? I can’t seem to find it.”

“...Waaah... Onii-chan, you meanie...”

With that said, I noted something in my mind.

Nikaidou Arashi – She was probably a friend, but I had to be especially careful around her.

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## Notes

1. *One-Eyed Dragon Masamune*: Likely talking about Date Masamune. See on [Wikipedia](#)
2. *Weapons Act*: See on [Japanese laws](#)
3. *Shigaraki*: Japanese pottery. See on [Wikipedia](#)
4. Hair style of ronin’s. See on [Wikipedia](#)
5. Someone who’s with an older woman. See on [Wikipedia](#)
6. *Storm*: “Arashi” (嵐) lit. means “storm”.
7. *Toorima*: Demon who brings misfortune to homes it passes through.



## April 3rd: 10th Day Living Together

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Now then.

Even though it might be a bit late, but let me tell you myself that from this spring on I'd be going to attend the same high school as my sister.

St. Liliانا Academy.

I wasn't too familiar with it as I had lived in Kyoto for a long time, but here – in Tokyo – it apparently was a somewhat famous school.

A christian school, just as its name suggested. Sons and daughters from all kinds of famous families gathered at this place, that in itself wasn't very unusual though. The interesting thing was that unlike many prestigious schools, there weren't any spoiled, rich kids you'd usually see.

First off, there was no so-called 'Escalator System'<sup>[1]</sup> in this academy.

Even though it was an institution that incorporated students from kindergarten all the way to graduate school, there was no semi-automatic system for getting into the next grade once they had entered the academy. To get to the next grade, everyone had to pass a rigid test. The test for those who already were enrolled was even worse compared to the one for the students who transferred in, or so I had heard.

Speaking of those who were forced to drop out for 'lacking ability', they were in great numbers every year. Since the academy had the tradition to not care about what kind of connections or how much money one had, they wouldn't be able to carry on through using that kind of underhanded trick.

But for exactly that reason all the students were thoroughly trained.

Those who came because of it being a prestigious school would be weeded out quickly and only those with true talent would survive. Furthermore, there were enough children from families with lots of political power or money.

In short, St. Liliانا Academy was a super elite school with a system to constantly filter out those who were lacking ability to then thoroughly polish the surviving talented ones.

And soon I'd be attending that super elite school.

"Please don't make such a stiff face, Onii-chan."

My sister stopped in front of St. Liliانا Academy's magnificent main gate and smiled.

"It's neither a prison nor a juvenile detention center. It's simply a school normal teenagers go to."

"Even if you say that..."

I grumbled as I looked up at the gate that looked like something you'd see in front of a



castle.

“Well, when I was in Kyoto, the school I went to was notable too, but it can’t compare to this school’s level.”

“Please get a hold of yourself. School’s going to begin in a week and you’re already say those things, what will you do by then?”

“I’m not as capable as Akiko.”

“But Onii-chan, you were able to pass this academy’s admission test after all. You shouldn’t be anxious anymore, right?”

Certainly, that was the case.

Just like I said earlier, in this academy it didn’t matter if you had connections or money. One’s pure ability was the only key that could open its doors.

Well, even though my grades hadn’t been *that* great, I had somehow managed to pass the entrance test – Well, it had been a test for those who excelled in a certain skill though. For now, I’ll just leave it at that.

The important thing was that attending this academy would be quite a burden on me.

If I may speak my mind, it was due to my laziness.

I had put in a great amount of effort to live together with my sister.

If it had been possible, I’d have liked to live the rest of my life without all that trouble.

“Ugh. I don’t like this. I guess there’s no choice but to study lots, huh?”

“If it’s Onii-chan, there shouldn’t be any problems that could trouble you. If you can’t do it for some reason, then I’ll shift my full attention to being your teacher.”

“So I’ll be an older brother who’s relying on his younger sister to teach him, huh? That’d be unpleasant. I said younger sister, but we’re twins. We’re the same age. That’d feel somewhat vexing.”

“Oh, come on. Please don’t act like a child throwing a tantrum. Certainly, I was the one who asked Onii-chan to attend the same school as I. However, didn’t Onii-chan agree to it? It’s not very manly to be so hesitant at times like these, is it?”

That certainly was the truth.

I couldn’t argue with that.

In the first place, the reason I had purposely come to this academy during spring was so that I could get familiar with the place. I had asked my sister, who had been busy with work, to come here as well on top of that. So for me wanting to bail’s too much, huh?

“It’ll be alright, Onii-chan. Don’t be scared.”

My sister passed through the gate with one step while she beckoned me over.

*...Damn.*

*She's treating me like a child.*

I had handled our move and thought that I had at least been able to hold up my honor as an older brother.

Like that it seemed all for naught.

*Oh my, it's a bit of a problem to have such a capable little sister.*

My sister had accepted my words, 'Become a good girl', and cherished them as if they were the words of god since the time we had been separated. She had grown up to be a splendid young lady and an honor student.

*Even though neither my appearance nor my grades are that impressive, I'd still like to not be that much behind my sister.*

*At least not to a degree where I'd drag her down.*

"It'll be fine, Onii-chan. Everyone had to enroll into this academy, they're all human – just like us. Though the rumours surrounding this place could cause some weird misunderstandings."

"Ah. No, I'm not really worried about things like that."

"But there are some rare cases. Their existence itself could be described as dangerous, one wouldn't want to get close to them all their lives. They might as well be unworldly beings."

"...I wasn't really worried in the beginning, but after hearing that kind of thing now of which I haven't even thought about, I do get kind of anxious."

*What's that all about?*

*In this academy are people who even someone like my sister tries to avoid as much as possible? And they're supposed to be human?*

"It's okay. You won't be snatched away and eaten. Well, it happens occasionally, though."

"...So you're trying to say that every now and then someone's being snatched away and eaten... You're making it sound as if that has actually happened before."

"It's alright. I've already decided in my heart that I'm the only one to snatch Onii-chan away and eat him. If something happens, I'll make sure to protect Onii-chan. I won't forgive anyone who tries to steal my Onii-chan from me."

"That's really comforting to hear – that's what I'd like to say, but unfortunately I'm feeling a very different kind of anxiety now."

"You keep saying this and that. Onii-chan, the point is that you just don't want to go into this academy, right?"

"Yup."

“Jeez. You’re really a troubling person, aren’t you?”

My sister said and started giggling.

“However, it’s something new that Onii-chan throws a tantrum in that way, isn’t it? It’s very cute and I love it.”

“——?! H-How humiliating...! Not once in my entire life have you insulted me that much! No, never! Ah, damn it, I’m being treated here as someone useless...”

I was exaggerating a bit with that.

In any case, I finally made up my mind and walked onto the academy grounds.

But it was nothing out of the ordinary, it was just an institutional academy after all.

Neither would one get shot at out of the blue, nor would they be told, ‘Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!’<sup>[2]</sup>, by some majestic voice.

However, this was a prestigious school overflowing with donations. There were ‘Taisho Romance’<sup>[3]</sup>-like facilities which seemed to cost an absurd amount of money wherever one looked. Despite that, the design seemed to avoid being too gaudy or pompous. They weren’t flaunting their wealth, it was a place that lived up to its reputation.

“Now then, I’ll show you all the academy’s facilities. This academy’s quite big, so I’ll limit it to the places I’m actually able to show right now.”

“Mhm. I’ll be counting on you then.”

During spring break when there was little bustle, I inspected the academy being guided by my little sister.

A gymnasium with all the latest equipment.

A majestic and honourable looking martial arts stadium.

An auditorium that looked like an arena.

A cafeteria with a kitchen that looked as if it was from a famous hotel.

...*Oh boy.*

This made the school I had attended in Kyoto look like a joke. I was witnessing the grandioseness of this academy.

In addition to their over a hundred years old tradition, there was still a great number of old buildings that had been designated to be cultural assets. They adopted modern technologies while preserving their culture, it gave off a ‘we can do anything’ kind of atmosphere.

How to put it?

To be honest, it was really uncomfortable for someone from the lower middle class.

“For now that’s a rough tour of the facilities. What do you think of it?”

"Mhm. To tell the truth, it makes me nervous."

"It'll be okay. You'll get used to it soon enough."

"Is that so?"

"One year ago I've felt the same way Onii-chan's feeling right now. At the time I had been admitted to this academy, I certainly was greatly surprised by what I've seen. There was a strange and peculiar atmosphere to this place, right? It's a bit rude to say it, but... it felt like there was an intimidating air or something oppressive here."

"Hmm. So you felt this way too, huh?"

"Yes. But I got used to it soon enough. That's why everything will be fine. Onii-chan will surely get used to it soon, too."

...My sister said to me.

I had heard that there were plenty of students who ended up dropping out because they hadn't gotten used to this academy's uniqueness. And on top of that, I had heard a rumor that the number of students who got kicked out due to failing the grade promotion exam was even higher.

*Oh dear.*

*Can I really do that? Keeping up with this entire school?*

*The work I have to do to keep up with this school – it's a bunch more than I imagined. Ah, shit. I really did make a mistake here, huh?*

*Well.*

*I'm still Himenokouji Akiko's older brother. No matter how scared I am, there's no way I could give up without trying. After I've forced my way through to move and live with her it's the only thing that makes sense. Above all else, I mustn't do anything that'd damage my sister's reputation.*

"With that, Onii-chan..."

"Hmm?"

"Regarding an extended tour around here—"

My sister said and apologetically continued with:

"Sorry, but it's about time that I headed off to the student council."

"Ah, I see. It's already that time, huh?"

Well, I knew from the beginning that this would happen.

I unreasonably asked her to show me around the academy instead of placing my sister's work first, which I knew of beforehand.

"It's fine, go on ahead. You don't have to worry about me. I'll take my time and walk around by myself later."

"Will you be okay? Will you be okay by yourself?"

"Hey, hey. I'm still your elder brother, aren't I? I'm not a kid, I'll be able to handle that much by myself."

"If not, I wouldn't mind you waiting for me outside the academy. Or wouldn't it be better if you just returned home for now?"

"I deliberately took the time to come here. I might as well take my time to look around now. It'll make me feel less uneasy once school's starting, right?"

"But, Onii-chan, didn't you just feel uneasy about entering this academy on your own?"

"Dummy. That was just in the beginning. Just like you've said, I've already gotten used to it. There are no more problems now."

"Ah. Well, if that's the case then it's fine, but..."

"Okay, hurry up and get going. If you're taking this long, it'd cause things like, 'You're slowing your sister down' and that'd really trouble me, okay?"

My sister still displayed a bit of hesitation. But she showed an expression of acceptance before long and said:

"I understand. Well then, I'll be heading off. I'll try to finish as fast as possible and then meet up with you later. Will the cafeteria be okay? If it's fine with you, then you could also have some tea while you wait."

"Mhm, sounds good. Alright, let's do that then."

"And one more thing."

My sister said and suddenly put on a serious expression. She then continued:

"I'll give Onii-chan a piece of advice, please follow it at all costs."

"Advice?"

"Yes. You must under no circumstances get close to the student council room – That's the one most important thing that I'd like you to do. Okay?"

"...Is it because the student council president'd be there?"

"That's true. However, there's another reason as well. In any case, please don't come near it."

"But why? You're also a member of the student council, right?"

"Anyway, things that are no good are no good, okay? If you want to see it no matter what, then I'll find a chance later. So please obey for today at least, understood?"

*Hmm.*

*She doesn't hesitate to declare to the world that she's a bro-con, plus she thinks that peeping at someone in the bath's something mandatory, and yet she's saying that. She doesn't want me to get near the student council as if it was a stronghold.*

*Well, the student council's Nikaido Arashi – that dangerous predator would be there too. It's not like I don't understand why my sister wants me to stay as far away from that place as possible...*

“...Okay, I'll follow your advice. For today I won't come close to the student council, I promise.”

“Thank you very much. Hearing that makes me feel relieved.”

“What are you saying? Something like that's nothing.”

“While I'm at it, if you gave me a goodbye kiss, it'd make me feel even less anxious.”

“This conversating has just made quite the leap.”

“Or if you said, ‘You're the cutest woman in the world. I love you.’, that'd let me be even less anxious.”

“You don't have any plans on fixing up this conversation, do you?”

“...You're not going to say it?”

“I'll have to decline.”

“If you don't hurry and say it, I'll be late for the student council, you know?!”

“Oh. Here comes your strong point – getting mad even though you're at fault.”

“Or is it that... Onii-chan, you don't think I'm cute at all?!”

“Eh? No way. You're cute. You're so cute.”

“Hey, there's no feeling in that at all! Onii-chan, you meanie! You better be careful when the moon's not out at night! I'll appear out of the darkness and steal away your lips!”

Leaving me with that threat, my sister hurriedly ran off.

*It's probably that she really does run late for the student council because she was wasting time with this silly chit-chat.*

*She's easy to get along despite being my little sister.*



...However, I've something to confess.

Looking around the school all by myself, to be honest, it was disheartening.

Well.

In this academy there really was a peculiar atmosphere.

It gave off some kind of earth-shattering sense.

Plus, having a football match in a rival's stadium can't even compare to this kind of level here. If I had to elaborate, it was like mishearing that party clothes'd be okay and then showing up at a funeral thinking it was a party, something like that.

The academy was by no means an exclusive one. But it felt like to enter it, one had to be above a certain level.

It pissed someone like me off a bit, who didn't have good grades to begin with.

...Ah, whatever.

One way or another, it was too late to get rid of the whole matter. I just had to accept my fate and get used to this atmosphere. Though the question whether I could keep up my grades or not was somewhat problematic.

"Now then. Which place to check out?"

Without having anything particular in mind, I wandered around. All the while trying to breathe in this academy's atmosphere as much as possible.

It was in the middle of spring break. And there weren't many people, as expected. However, the premises were in no way devoid of people. I saw all kinds of students making efforts in different clubs here and there.

It wasn't an elite school just for show. The students were also expected to have excellent results in sports, not just in academics. There weren't many students who holed themselves up in their rooms and goggled textbooks all day.

Accomplished in both, literary and military arts.

Saying that is easy, and yet the thought of actually doing it was making me increasingly nervous.

"Oh?"

While I had been thinking stuff like that, I had walked onto the sports field.

Huge. You could have baseball and football games at the same time here.

*To think something this big just sits inside the Yamanote Line<sup>[4]</sup> like that... Whoa, just thinking about it makes me feel absurdly nervous. That added even more to the intense pressure. I should probably think of things which are more helpful with my mentality.*

*For now, let's do that.* The girl's track and field club was practicing nearby.

*I think I'll check that out for now—*

"So you're staring at girls in broad daylight, how very gentlemanly."

"Eh?"

"But that's unfortunate for you. The track and field club members will only be wearing the exposing uniforms during competitions. Or are you the kind of man who thinks that unfashionable tracksuits have more sex appeal anyway?"

I turned around to see from who this almost strangely quiet voice was coming from.

“Ah! It’s you!”

It was the girl I had experienced those various things at the large shopping mall with a few days ago.

The beauty with blond hair and blue eyes whose personality I didn’t really get.

And today she was wearing this academy’s uniform.

“By the way, the board of directors has issued a strict order that everything besides navy blue bloomers isn’t acceptable as the gym uniform for the girls of this academy. Good for you, your perverted hobby fits perfectly.”

“Neither did I want to hear about this academy’s philosophy on uniforms nor about the girl’s athletic uniform in specific. And even though it’s a bit late, I’m neither here to stare at girls, nor do I think tracksuits have sex appeal.”

“Ah, I see. That’s unfortunate. If you desired it, I planned to exclusively show myself off to you in a tracksuit.”

“...”

*It so hard to talk to her.*

“You really helped me out the other day.”

“Eh? Ah. It’s alright, don’t worry about it.”

“Yes, exactly that. I was just saying that out of courtesy, there’s no need to reply so seriously.”

“...”

Ah, if I had to pinpoint it, it’d probably be like this:

Could this girl be at the peak of her rebellious age...?

“I’m sorry. But it’s like I said before, every single thing you do makes me want to flare up.”

“Well, that’s troubling...”

“And to be honest, I think my personality makes it very difficult for you to communicate with me.”

“If you know it then why don’t you do something about it?”

“However, there’s something that I want you to understand. I was very nervous that day.”

“Nervous?”

*The everlasting pokerface just said that?*

“It’s difficult to understand if you’re not I, you see. I was so nervous that day that I



couldn't remember anything I had told you."

"Oh? I don't know what I should rather be, surprised or shocked."

*Well.*

*If I think about it a bit, that shopping mall was probably a place she wasn't too familiar with. Truth is, she only wandered around recklessly, like someone who didn't even know what to do. One can't really tell from her appearance, but she probably wasn't her usual self. Somewhat like how I felt when I was walking around this academy – as if I was playing in an away match.*

*But I mean... Her behavior was really strange nonetheless, huh? She was saying stuff to someone she had just met that no one normal would, she didn't even bother to hold back. I see, if she just said those things out of nervousness, then I can understand.*

"I understand. Don't take it to heart, but I was really thrown off by you that day. If you were nervous like you said, then it can't be helped, I guess. And today I'll try to get a new impression of you."

"Saying that really helps. Since that day I've felt like I had left a bad impression on you and been anxious because of that. I don't know what you think, but – the true me is someone bashful and shy. There have been incidents in the past where I've said things without thinking because of my nervousness."

"Ah, I see. Well, I can kind of understand it. That's just human."

"So the misunderstanding has been cleared then?"

"Yup. Everything's clear, no problem."

"I see. That's good. Well then, once again, please take care of me from now on."

"Mhm. Same here."

"By the way, there's something I'd like to know."

"Eh? What is it?"

"Are you a virgin?"

I had made a fool out of myself.

"—Didn't we already get this topic over with?! Just how forgetful can you be to forget something that ridiculous?!"

I mean, a shy girl wouldn't just bring up a topic like that!

"Sorry. That time I was extremely nervous, so I've forgotten everything about it."

"Really, please gimme a break... I've suffered quite the trauma from what has happened then. If at all possible, I'd like to not let it happen again—"

"So are you a virgin after all? Or are you not?"

"How can you say something like right after what I've said?!"

"By the way I'm a maiden."

"We already been there last time!"

"But now you know something personal about me, don't you? Since that's the case, shouldn't you return the favor?"

"And your forceful way's still fresh in my mind too!"

"..."

With that, she started to contemplate about something for a short while.

She had her usual flat expression and was staring off to somewhere else. Then she finally started to slowly return her gaze to me.

"Sorry. What was I just talking about?"

"...Do you possibly have youth alzheimers?"

"By the way, virgin-kun. What are you doing here?"

"Stop derailing the conversation with such nonsense!"

*Could it be that this girl's really funny in the head?*

*She's treating me like a virgin. I didn't answer her question and she shouldn't be able to remember it from last time.*

*Oh well.*

*It's a pain in the ass to correct her. And it's the truth anyway.*

"...Um, you know. I'm going to attend this academy starting in spring. So I came here to prepare myself beforehand. Even though, well, it's really just me taking a look around, you know?"

"I see. And so you decided to watch the girl's track and field club then, huh? You were concentrating intensely on them to burn the image of their young, lustrous bodies into your mind."

"I'm a transfer student who wanted to get familiar with this school, so did I hope to achieve that by pinpointing the girl's track and field club in order to check them out? Wrong, I didn't. It's more like I thought I could breathe in a lot of this academy's atmosphere if I visited it. Nothing more. I wondered what the academy would be like that I'd be attending until graduation? Just so that I could prepare myself for the atmosphere, okay?"

"I see. So you want to suck in the breath of the track and field club girls. I admire your tenacity."

"...Could it be that you just want to look down on me, no matter what?"

"Sorry. Whenever I see you, I can't help but picking a fight."

*Which reminds me, she's said something like that before.*

*Strange.*

*I wonder if I emit some kind of aura that makes people want to bully me.*

*Well, my height and weight are really average, so are my looks. But that alone shouldn't be enough to make people pick a fight with me.*

"Please don't worry. I'm not so boorish as to blame you for each and every single one of your perverted tendencies. I think I'll just pretend I didn't see your behavior."

"...Somehow it feels like you've decided to see me in quite the negative light already."

"If you insist on being innocent, then I would like you to proof it with some evidence."

"I'd rather like you to present some evidence that I'm not. If you're going to treat me as guilty, then I want you to proof me so."

"Oh well, if you want my acknowledgement then——"

She carried on while ignoring me.

"If you can desire me sexually while neither wearing a tracksuit nor being a member of the club, then I guess I could consider recognizing your sexual tendencies as normal."

"...So that totally obscene logic again, huh?"

"Simply put, we're talking about whether you can use me to masturbate or not."

"STOOOOOOOOP!"

As expected, I had to put an end to it.

"I'm totally against girls using that kind of word!"

"Simply put, we're talking about whether you can use me to do yourself or not."

"Changing it into a softer expression doesn't change anything!"

"I think that violates the freedom of speech. 'Masturbating' and 'doing yourself' are both splendid phrases for describing the act of pleasuring oneself. And they aren't words that need to be censored on television either. I think you don't need to judge me so much with that terrible expression of yours."

"Anyway, it's no good! I forbid it! I won't forgive it either! Absolutely not!"

"You're unexpectedly stubborn."

She said without a change in expression and continued:

"Well, it's fine. I don't really want to see you pleasure yourself in front of me, so for now I shall acknowledge that your taste is normal."

"Well, thanks... Actually, I noticed something now. You don't really deserve thanks, do you?"

And on top of that, she was only acknowledging it for now.

“That’s not true. I’ve said obscene words like ‘masturbation’ and ‘do yourself’ in front of you. If anyone else had heard that, they’d probably wet themselves from pleasure, what an extremely lucky day you’re having. It’s alright to thank me for something like that.”

“Sorry, they didn’t get me flustered, though.”

*Wait, doesn’t it look like I’ve approved of those indecent words like that?*

“By the way, that was the first time I’ve ever said either of those.”

“Ehhh?!”

“My face was burning up from embarrassment, to be honest. Though, you probably couldn’t see it.”

“That so... I thought you’d surely use those words daily.”

“How rude. I might look like this, but I’m still someone of a certain status. Don’t take me for someone who’d quickly do something so thoughtless.”

“...Going by that, is it okay for you to do something that thoughtless in front of a stranger like me?”

“It can’t be helped.”

She said and sighed.

“No matter what you do or how, I just can’t stop myself from picking a fight with you.”

“Well that’s... how to say... problematic.”

Very problematic for me as well as for her.

“If that’s the case, then it’s probably that you and me have bad compatibility. Don’t you think it’d be better to avoid each other? For both of us.”

“I mustn’t do that. You’re someone who needs to be observed. You pretended to inspect the girl’s track and field club while you actually schemed something behind the scenes like an evil genius— If I leave you alone and something happens, I’d also be to blame partly.”

“Like I said, you misunderstood that.”

“So, if you want to continue looking around, then I’ll accompany you.”

“Eh? You will?”

I was confused by the sudden proposal.

“You mean you’ll show me around?”

“Generally speaking, yes.”

“But is that really okay? You came here on a holiday, don’t you have work to do?”

"I wouldn't say that I've got nothing to do. However, given the circumstances, I believe this has to be my priority."

"Hm."

*I feel bad if I cut into her time, but that'd make everything work out much smoother. If a student from here's guiding me around, it'd probably help to ease the severity of this 'away game' feeling. I feel like I'd rather have to bow my head and beg her of that.*

"Well, that'd really help me out. Sorry, but can I take you up on that?"

"You don't need to thank me. I'm simply fulfilling a duty every student of this academy has. With that——"

She said and her pokerface showed a bit of meekness (how shocking!).

"I'm still reflecting upon things."

"Reflecting?"

*On what?*

*That I really am innocent and not a pervert?*

"Upon whether I'm really hard to deal with."

"..."

*Really obsessed over that, huh?*

"I really regret being like that. I'm honestly, seriously sorry for everything from the bottom of my heart. If I could, I'd like to go back to the day when we first met and do everything over again."

"Er... Isn't that a bit exaggerated?"

"Not at all. If my wish would be fulfilled, then I think I wouldn't even mind if you sexually assaulted me."

"Wait, hold on a second. Can you please stop making it sound like I'm someone who'd actually want to do that?"

"If my wish would be fulfilled, then I think I'd accept my fate and be impregnated with your illegitimate child."

"No, like I was saying, I'd like you to not continue as if you and I were like that, alright?"

"Well, when I keep saying these things, it makes dealing with me increasingly difficult, I'm well aware of that."

"...You're at least self-aware, huh?"

Well, rather than difficult to deal with, it'd be more fitting to say that I had no idea how to deal with her at all.

“Anyway, let’s put that aside. I look forward to be shown around.”

“So you accept me as your guide?”

“Mhm.”

“...Even though I’m the one who proposed it?”

Using that as a preface, she continued with:

“Do you think that’s okay? If you’ll be going with me like this, you’ll become more and more fascinated. If you want to refuse, now’s the time.”

“I’m already aware of something like that... but it’s fine. I wouldn’t say that I already understand what you’re like – but I have a rough idea. I won’t really mind it, so please, I’d love to have you show me around.”

“I see.”

She said and then stared off into the distance.

This day was also blessed with sunny weather, and even though one wouldn’t think it to be possible since we were inside the city, you could see all the vastness of the clear blue sky.

A calm and warm wind blew through from time to time, carrying the scent of the cherry blossoms.

It was as if she had blended into such a painting.



"I understand. Then I shall guide you around."

For just a moment.

Her lips looked like a flower that had just begun to blossom.

...Ooh.

*Until now, I haven't seen anything on her face that's close to something like an expression...*

And yet, her smile was quite lovely.

Even expressionless she was still an amazing beauty, of course. However, it was a beauty that made people keep their distance. To be honest, it was a bit astonishing. Just a little she had turned into a more charming woman.

Well, this was probably how she usually was, but still... it shocked me a bit nonetheless. If that was how she looks when she smiled, then I thought it'd be lovely to always see her smiling—

"What?"

She asked, seemingly noticed that I had a different look in my eyes and continued:

"Since earlier you've had this awfully happy grin on your face. Are you picturing how you sexually assault me, this and that happening, and burn with satisfaction over it?"

"...You're still going on about that?"

"And after that you plan on remembering that scene and secretly use it to indulge yourself in self-pleasure. Your perverted nature makes me feel extremely uneasy."

"Again, you've gotten it all wrong."

"Well, it's fine. I owe you that much at least. No matter what you do to me, I'll pardon the most of it."

"Could your 'debt' possible be about *that*? About how dealing with you's difficult because of how you are?"

"That's right."

*She's totally obsessed with that.*

*I mean, if she's aware of it, why doesn't she try to do something about it?*

"Hey, you know, I don't really know what you're thinking, but if it's about that then I don't think you owe me anything really."

"Hearing that makes me feel better, but I think it's not something that I can just forget about."

"It's fine, okay? You're showing me around the academy for instance, right? We can just say we're even with that."

"No. Doing something that minor, it's not enough to make us even. Even if I have to endure that unpleasant smell from you, the remaining debt wouldn't be zero nonetheless."

"You're bringing that up again?!"

*And it even caused me a major emotional trauma!*



“Hold on a second! I want to provide proof of my innocence right here! For the sake of my honor!”

“Let’s hear it then.”

“First off, I properly bathed today before I headed out.”

“How admirable.”

“Plus, the store’s interior was quite heated up the other day, but today, as you can see, the weather’s clear. So sweat as a pretext for smelling weird’s out of question.”

“Certainly, the weather’s nice. Neither too hot, nor too cold, and there isn’t much humidity either. The surroundings are open too, so the air isn’t stuffy.”

“And on top of that, a good friend of mine guaranteed it. Even though we’ve known each other for a long time, my friend never noticed my body odour being anything major.”

“Your friend said that? It must’ve taken a considerable amount of courage for someone who’s neither your parents nor significant other to say something like that. You have a really good friend, you know? It’d be wise to treasure someone like that.”

“And finally there’s one more thing. Last night I didn’t eat any garlic.”

“Even though garlic has a high nutritional value, it does certainly leave a bit of a smell. I think that was a wise decision.”

“So, with all that, I must ask you once again.”

“Let’s hear it.”

“...Do I really smell that bad?”

“Yes. You stink.”

“WHY?!”

I felt like fainting.

“Isn’t that strange?! Even though I’ve gotten rid of all possible causes, just where am I supposed to smell from?!”

“Asking me something like that troubles me a bit. This is only our second meeting, so how should I know how to tell you something so private.”

“Unacceptable! Please tell me just where this smell is coming from, I beg you!”

“That’s a troubling question. How should I describe something like a ‘hard to describe but unpleasant odor’ accurately, I wonder.”

“Is my body odor so special that you have to say something like that?!”

“If I had to, then... I know, if I had to say, ‘rotten food that has been sitting under the blazing sun for an entire summer week’, it’s something like that.”

“Shit... If you’re that harsh, then I’m too deprived of energy to even retort back!”

I had raised my voice just to gloss over her words, so this is a secret between you and me.

“Do you want to know the origin of the smell?”

“What? You happen to know something?”

“Yes. As expected, I’ve already figured it out. Do you want to know?”

“I want to know! Of course I do!”

“Really?”

“There’s nothing I’d rather know!”

“Do you swear not to go back on that?”

“There’s no need to even ask that!”

“I see. Then I’ll respect your resolution.”

And so, with her customary quiet expression, she continued:

“But sorry. I can’t say it after all.”

“Eh? Why?”

“Because I want to keep this topic going.”

...

“Are you by chance mad at me?”

“...No. I wouldn’t know whether I’m angry or something...”

I don’t know whether I was just stunned or plain exhausted.

“Um. You won’t tell me? Even though you were leading me on up until now?”

“Sorry. I understand what you’re trying to say, but I wish to keep this topic going on, no matter what. Please understand.”

“No matter what?”

“No matter what. For that reason, I’d kneel in front of you or do anything you’d like me to.”

“No, there’s no need for that.”

“If not, then I could strip down and give you my underwear as an apology.”

“Okay, let’s stop here.”

I quickly cut in and continued with...

“I got it. I don’t really understand, but I got it. If you don’t want to talk about it, then I

won't force you. But as expected I don't know what to think of how you said all that earlier and then don't give me an answer."

"Sorry. Please go along with my selfishness."

"Ah, it's fine. Don't worry about it."

Those were my true feelings.

Honestly, it'd be normal for me to have gotten angry by then, but even though she had said such harsh stuff, strangely, I didn't feel any anger.

The reason was probably because I couldn't really feel any ill intent from her. That probably explains it.

*What an extremely strange person. I guess you could call this her talent, huh?*

"In exchange, I'd like to ask something else."

"I wonder what."

"Why do you wish to keep that topic going? Could you tell me that? I think it'd be fine to tell me that much."

"There are three reasons.", she said, "First, if I keep this topic up as long as possible, I think I'll be enjoying to tease you a lot."

"...Well, I don't know what I was expecting. But still, that's probably the main reason, huh?"

"Sorry. As an apology, I could strip down and give you my under—"

"No, it's fine already; ...And? The other reasons are?"

"Second, I've got one topic to talk to you about at least."

"...If it's about topics, then I think there's as much as you'd want to, right? There's no need to hold back. You could talk about how I'm not familiar with this academy for example. And from there several other topics connect."

"That sounds about right in theory, but it wouldn't be that easy. I get randomly nervous when I meet you, which causes me to blurt out strange things."

"Nervous? You?"

"That's right."

"That's a lie. You're not nervous at all."

"Yes, I am."

"Your expression hasn't changed at all and your voice's been normal all along, too."

"I'm nervous in places you can't see."

"Mhm, so sticking to something like that, huh? I don't really believe you."

"If you won't believe me, then I guess I'll have to strip down and give you my underwear for you to take along."

"Neither do I understand how it has gotten to that, nor do I get why you're so stubborn on that topic, but for now I'll humbly decline your offer."

"How mysterious. There are a lot of people who'd risk their lives for my underwear, and yet you'd abandon your right to them even though they're right under your nose?"

"Please don't just go and lump peoples' interests together like that; ...And? The third?"

"I think I want to wait with that one until a more dramatic chance to reveal it arrives."

"No, there's no need for such a thing..."

"It's necessary to sort out my feelings a bit longer. I've only just noticed it myself moments ago. The true identity of your smell, that is."

"Huh?"

"With that, do you understand? The reason I want to keep this topic going."

"Well, I can't say I do, but at least I understand that you've got your reason. Which is that you don't need a reason, a whim will already do."

"How rude. If you plan to continue this completely untrue slander, then I'll have to make you wear my underwear. Right here, right now."

*She's really obsessed with that.*

*Could it be that she's having fun with that joke?*

"So that's that. We seem to have strayed way off topic and as if we're forgetting something..."

"I wonder what."

"Isn't it about time you showed me around?"

"Now that I think of it, that was our original motive, wasn't it?"

"That's right. It'd trouble me if you forgot."

"Well then, I have something unfortunate to tell you.", she said, suddenly changed the tone of her voice, and then continued, "It seems quite a bit of time has passed during this silly chit-chat. I think it's about time I headed back."

"...Ugh."

"Please don't look at me like that. In my frenzy, I might take off my underwear and cover your face with it."

"No, it's okay. Well, I'm the one who asked you to show me around. There's no reason for me to force you to. But how should I put it, that you're saying that everything now was just 'silly chit-chat' makes me feel kind of..."

“Sorry. Talking with you was so interesting that it made me lose track of time.”

“Ah... Well, if you put it like that then I can hardly complain too much—”

“So, what you’re saying is that you understand?”

“Ah, damn it! I regret that I’ve answered honestly without thinking! Even though I knew that you’re that kind of person!”

“It’s Nasuhara Anastasia.”

She said.

Abruptly as usual.

“Eh?”

“My name. It’s Nasuhara Anastasia.”

She put out her right hand and I grasped it out of habit.

“Pleased to meet you.”

“Ah, yeah, nice to meet you.”

“Please call me Ana.”

“Ah, okay. Ana then. Understood.”

“Hmph. To think you called a woman ‘hole’<sup>[5]</sup>. As befitting of a man like you.”

“...Would you mind to not set up a trap like that?”

“Well, I’ll be leaving then.”

She said and turned her back to me.

“Farewell. I’ll pray that your academy life will be fortunate.”

“Ah, mhm. Thanks.”

“Also, make sure to prepare yourself for our next encounter.”

“Prepare myself for what?”

“With that, see you.”

With those parting words, Nasuhara Anastasia walked off in a dashing, energetic pace.

After each step she took, her swaying, golden hair looked like a field of wheat dandling in the wind. She only walked away, and yet it looked like a scene from a painting.

*Well.*

*She’s a gorgeous girl, huh? Though it’d be better if she was a bit easier to deal with nonetheless.*

*Anyway, I'll just have to deal with it.*

Nasuhara Anastasia had become an acquaintance with the parting words she had given me. This comforted me in the awkward situation which was me being a mediocre person in an elitist academy. When playing an away game, the more acquaintances, the better.

*So let's think about it more carefully.*

*Nasuhara Anastasia from just now.*

*The student council president Nikaido Arashi.*

*And my little sister.*

*With these three faces, it's already an away game no longer.*

*It's not a situation, where I can be as nervous as I want to anymore.*

*I'm Himenokouji Akiko's older brother after all.*

*I can't afford to embarrass my little sister. She has turned into a magnificent woman in the little time we've been separated. I must do all within my power to get my feet on the ground here.*

*Okay.*

*I'm fine now.*

In this academy where I felt a bit out of place I needed to give it my definite all. Studying, my job, housework, and it goes without saying that it had to work without lamenting. I've had to try and do it all. If I couldn't, then it'd be as if all the efforts, that had been taken to let the two of us live together, had been for naught—

"Onii-chan. What are you doing?"

"...Oh?"

My sister had returned.

"Akiko? Why are you here already? Are you done with the student council work?"

"Jeez. I've finished a long time ago."

She puffed her cheeks out and continued,

"I was waiting in the cafeteria, but no matter how long I did, Onii-chan wouldn't come. Thus, I went to look for you. You've already explored the academy enough, haven't you?"

"Ah, that's right. It's already that time, huh?"

"Making your little sister wait... Onii-chan, you're a terrible person."

"Sorry, sorry. That's certainly my fault."

"If you really feel bad, then please say, 'I'm sorry for making the beautiful and cute Akiko wait on me'."

"I'm sorry for making the beautiful and cute Akiko wait on me. I'm really sorry."

"...Hmph. Onii-chan's really obedient right now, isn't he? Agh, if that was the case then I should've requested something even—"

"Hey. You're already getting started on that?"

"Ehehe... But, you know, Onii-chan..."

"What is it?"

"You've got a different mood to you than before. Earlier, your expression was more stiff and rigid. Now I get the feeling that you're a bit more composed. Have you gotten used to this academy already?"

"Ah, yeah. That's true, isn't it? Now that you mention it, that seems to be the case."

Certainly.

The feeling I had when I first set foot upon this academy was completely different.

Now I was no longer as nervous as I had been. In reality I was somewhat anxious, but I thought I'd be able to deal with it like that.

This was probably because of *that*. It was all thanks to her, probably.

Nasuhara Anastasia.

It had just felt like a pointless pastime any yet that girl forced my nervousness to disappear. If I had to say it, then it was probably because a conversation with her forced me to go through a lot of hardships. I didn't have the time to think about anything else, I was focusing on trying to keep up with her pace desperately.

"That's how it is, Akiko. While I've checked this academy out, I became acquainted with a student. We talked about various things and before I knew it, I had relaxed."

"...Hmph. That makes it sound as if it was a female student. Am I right?"

"That's right, but..."

"Grrr."

My sister pouted her lips and put on a peevish-looking face.

"Well, it can't be helped. A little bit of infidelity is part of me being a cute little sister."

"Infidelity? What infidelity?"

"Anyway, everything else aside, it's apparent that coming to the academy on a holiday had an effect."

"Mhm, that's right, huh? Thank you for going out with me even though you were busy, Akiko."

“No, no. If Onii-chan desires it, then it doesn’t matter if it’s either through hell or deep water, I’ll fulfill it. By the way...”

“Hm? What?”

“Onii-chan. Did something happen while we were separated?”

“Eh? Something? What do you mean by something?”

“Nothing. I can’t really say what it is for sure, but... this usual unpleasant smell is coming from Onii-chan again.”

“Geh.”

*What the hell?*

*Did my sister just say the same thing as that golden haired beauty...?*

*And on top of that, she used the same pattern like when were at the shopping mall.*

“...Onii-chan. I’ve a really ominous feeling about this, but...”

Wrinkling up her eyebrows my sister continued with:

“The female student Onii-chan became acquainted with. What kind of person was she?”

“Eh? Umm. How to put it?”

That was a pretty difficult question.

‘That Nasuhara Anastasia, just how on earth could I describe her’, I wondered.

She was lacking a facial expression and her voice had been quiet as well. In general, whenever I had said anything, she’d find a reason to pick on me – something like that, I didn’t think I could find words to describe her in a satisfactory way.

*But for the moment, I shouldn’t say anything bad about the person who saved me just now. Also, I don’t find her detestable at all.*

“Her smile.”

That’s how it was.

As far as I could tell, that had been her strongest point.

“She was a girl with a lovely smile. Incredibly lovely.”

“...Hmph. Her smile was lovely, you say. Then I must’ve been over thinking. That person doesn’t smile easily... But that aside, Onii-chan, just now another serious problem has emerged.”

“Hm? What is it?”

“I’ve never heard Onii-chan say anything like, ‘Such a lovely smile’, to me.”

“Hm. That so?”



"That's right. You've never said it."

My sister seemed to be unable to clear the anger off her face.

"You've never said it to your cute little sister and yet you said something like that about an unfamiliar female student. That's a serious crime. If this was a better world, it'd be a crime you'd get in jail for."

"You're exaggerating a bit."

"Well then, 'Akiko's smile's also lovely', I'd like you to properly say that."

"...? What are you talking about?"

I tilted my head and said:

"That's obvious, isn't it? Akiko's smile *is* lovely. It's not necessary to go out of my way to state the obvious. After all, your smile's the one I love the most in this world."

".....Guha."

My sister collapsed all of a sudden.

"Hey, Akiko?! What's wrong?!"

"S-Such destructive power..."

"What's going on with you?! And why's your nose bleeding?!"

"I-It is okay... I'm alright."

My sister stopped me from helping her up and instead stood up by herself while pinching her nose.

"Is it anemia? Or perhaps a heatstroke? This early in spring?"

"No, it's nothing. I'm fine, it'll be okay in a bit. Seriously... Onii-chan's doing stuff like that now and then, I really can't let my guard down, can I...?"

"Eh? What was that?"

"Nothing at all. Anyway, my wish has been fulfilled. I'm greatly satisfied."

After she cleaned up her nose, my sister's face blushed red (Not the color of blood. Just making that clear.) and said:

"With that, my spirit's on the highest peak. Today I'll cook anything Onii-chan wants me to."

"Um, well, thanks for that. Are you really okay with that nose bleed though?"

"There's nothing to worry about. It was just a spurt of super-happiness and it stopped before long. My hemoglobin just went full throttle. More importantly, what do you want to eat? I'll really make anything you want, okay?"

"Um, okay, then..."

*She bled quite a bit from her nose so...*

“How about stir fried liver?”

“Stir fried liver? That’ll be no problem!”

My sister repeatedly nodded her head and showed a smile that would’ve been a perfect score.

*Yup.*

*There’s absolutely no mistaking it.*

*My sister’s smile is the most beautiful in the world. No matter what other people might say, for me it’s something even more obvious than  $1 + 1 = 2$ ... an undeniable truth. I wonder why she’s so delighted after I’ve confirmed something like that.*

*Oh well.*

*As long as my sister’s in high spirits, nothing else matters.*

“Well then, it’s about time we headed off, don’t you think?”

“Yes! Let’s stop by at the supermarket while we’re returning home!”

With this and that happening.

My day of checking out St. Liliana Academy ended without bigger incidents.

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## Notes

1. ‘*Escalator System*’: Schoolsystem in which students usually rise to the next grade without having to pass exams.
2. Reference to “Divine Comedy” by Dante Alighieri.
3. ‘*Taisho Romance*’: Artistic culture nearing the end of the Taisho Era (1912 – 1926) in Japan. Similar to the Romantic Period that originated in Europe near the end of the 18th century.
4. ‘*Yamanote Line*’: The Yamanote line is one of the major railway loops in Tokyo. It connects Tokyo’s busiest areas, so it’s very expensive to have land inside the area.
5. ‘*Hole*’: Play on words. “Ana” also means “hole” in Japanese.

## April 6th: 13th Day Living Together (Day before the Opening Ceremony)

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「That Nasuhara – could she be the daughter of that Nasuhara Group?」

A few days later.

GINBEI said after hearing about my tour around the academy.

“Hm? The Nasuhara Group? Seriously?”

「Well, the name Nasuhara isn't a that usual, right? All the more possible hearing how she's a student of that prestigious school, right? Goin' by your description, this Miss Anastasia gives off some celebrity-like atmosphere – something like that, right?」

“Ah, yeah. That's true.”

The Nasuhara Group.

A monster corporation that was present in almost every single manufacturing industry from spaceships to doorknob screws.

「Assumin' that's true, Akito, you've made a strong acquaintance before school even started. How lucky, huh?」

“Yeah. Even if you say that, it's still not clear whether it's true.”

「Even if she wasn't part of that large corporation lineage, I think the girl you met had quite the pleasant character nonetheless.」

“Well... true. I don't think she's just banal.”

*Though, adding to that, there's a bunch of other problems with her...*

「Makin' friends and not enemies is something good, especially when we think about the situation you're in. Livin' with your sister's something that's only possible 'cause delicate power relationships between some famous families are being balanced here. You should realize that this balance's slowly chippin' away. On top of that you hardly have any allies. Puttin' your blood-related sister aside, there's only me.」

“Mh. Well, guess that's true.”

「That Miss Anastasia seems like a reassurin' ally too, as long as you two get along, don't you think? That's a rare chance! You should take it no matter what. Not just her, that president as well.」

“Nikaido-san, huh? She's certainly become an ally, but... rather than reassuring, she seems more like the dangerous type, you know?”

「Controlled poison's medicine, fail to control it and it's just poison. So, don't you think takin' in good *and* evil makes one exceptional? If there's somethin' you can use, then

you must take advantage of it as much as possible.」

“No, well, maybe. But she doesn’t make it easy for me. If I carelessly dabble into it, then the hunter’ll become the hunted, or so. I think that in the end I’ll be the one being seduced.”

「Oh, really? I don’t really wanna hear this from someone who outwitted a great bunch of people to get where he is.」

An exasperated sigh slipped through the phone.

And a little while later:

「Akito, wouldn’t you consider to stop your current lifestyle?」

“Eh?”

「You’re very important to me. That’s why I agreed to support you with all of that stuff. I gave you advice when necessary. And on top of that, I’ve tried to respect the decisions you’ve been making lately as much as possible, since it seemed like you considered ’em thoroughly. That’s why I hate to say this, but – I’m at my limit.」

For the first time ever, Ginbei, who always seemed to value some cynicism, had a somewhat serious voice.

「Akito, that’s my last advice to you. It’d be better if you stopped. Honestly, you’re not the type that’s cut out for such a life. It needs careful balancin’ of different relationships, like a tightrope act, you need to carefully hold those relationships together.」

“...”

「As far as I can tell, your personality’s more suited for a peaceful life, for cultivating spinach on some farm or so. I think your misfortune started when the Takanomiya Family adopted you, but... even though you’ve strayed off this far, you might still be able to get back on track. You know that yourself, right? The most suitable path for you, that is.」

“...Well, I can’t argue with that. I agree.”

「Come back, Akito! If you do so now, you could barely make it! Leave your sister to the Arisugawas. It’d be fine if you just relied on the Takanomiyas like you’ve been up til now. There’ll probably be some trouble, but the rewards wouldn’t lack either. Not to mention that the Arisugawa and Takanomiya Families weren’t trying to take away the relationship as siblings between you guys, right?」

“You’re right about that. Or rather, that’d be the best.”

「I must’ve been painful for siblings like you two to not be able to talk with each other and to be separated as you were. It’s not hard to imagine that it ached you both to get in touch. But this short living together should’ve calmed that aching. The Arisugawa and Takanomiya Families won’t be able to not reconsider how they treated you as siblings, so it should be easy for you to negotiate some improvements in treatment. It won’t change the fact that you two will end up separated again, but... it’d be better

than no relationship at all, like before.」

“That’s true, probably.”

「And I don’t think I need to say this, but I want to make it clear. I’m not doin’ this ‘cause the Takanomiya or Arisugawa Families asked me to.」

“I know, Ginbei. Like you said, no need to tell me that.”

「Then let me ask you again.」

There was a small pause.

「Akito, won’t you consider to stop your current lifestyle and come back here?」

“I don’t.”

I said without any hesitation.

“I neither have any intention of giving up on my current life, nor do I plan to return back there. As you said, I’ve put a great amount of consideration into what I’ve done. After I’ve come this far, I’ve no intention to withdraw or raise a white flag. I wouldn’t trade the privilege to live together with my precious family for the entire world. Being pushed around by someone who isn’t even related to me and on top of that being separated from my sister – I’ve had enough of that. Even if it’ll get me into deep trouble to protect this life, I’ll use all my power and knowledge to bulldoze my resolution through. And so I’ll always protect my right like that – no matter what. Gin, I think your advice is sound, if our situations were switched out, I think I’d do the same. But I can’t follow this time.”

「No matter what?」

“No matter what.”

「Even if it worked, what you’ve done this time was somewhat forceful. There should’ve been a more logical and smoother way to see it through. It might’ve taken a bit more time, but you should’ve been able to find a more stable solution after some thinkin’, I guess. So even though it’d be a somewhat roundabout way, that path’d be still available – knowin’ that... still no?」

“Give it up, Gin. This once I’d like to have it my way.”

「...I see.」

Saying that, my good friend went silent on the other side of the phone.

“Gin.”

「”What is it?”」

“Are you mad?”

「Why would you think that?」

“Err, well, you’ve gone silent, so...”

「Don't worry. It's just 'cause I'm tryin' my hardest not to laugh.」

“Ah... Well, if that's the case, then fine. At any rate, you're the one person in this world I don't want to anger.”

「If that's true, then think about how you're dealin' with me a bit more... Anyway, I'm fine, your stubbornness really amazes me, but I'm fine. I somewhat expected that response, but I wanted to try nonetheless.」

“...? In other words?”

「If your resolution would've swayed just a little bit by my proposal, I had planned to use all I could to force you to stop. Your reckless ways to live with your family, that is.」

“...Scary.”

My friend probably really had that intention.

That's just the kind of person Sawatari Ginbei Haruomi was, if Ginbei had actually tried to, I think it would've succeeded.

「I'm pleased that you're a man who does everything in one logical go. That's how a man I'm approving of should be.」

“What's that? Praising me again? Flattery will get you nowhere, alright?”

「You're sayin' that, but you're probably blushin' and avertin' your eyes to nowhere right now. And yet you know that I'm on the other side of the phone.」

“Oh, shut up.”

「Fufu... Anyway, I'm relieved. If your resolve's that resolute, then it'll be fine. From now on there'll be a lot of trouble. But if it's you then you might just be able to overcome it.」

“That's very optimistic considering it's coming from you, Gin. To be honest, I don't think the prospects are that bright.”

「No, I'm sure everythin' will be fine.」

With a strange, deciding tone, my good friend gave the seal of approval.

「Well then, Akito. I'll be comin' to visit you before long. Until then, take care.」



“...Oh boy.”

I was in the usual apartment in the 70-year-old, run-down dormitory.

After I've had finished up my phone call with Ginbei, I let out a big sigh and collapsed onto the tatami mat.

“Gin’s mood seems to have improved a bit, huh...?”

Sawatari Ginbei Haruomi, the person that always seemed to have a cynical smile on the face. Even though I’ve known my friend for a long time, I’ve never once seen that person raise their voice at me.

But it’s precisely because we’ve known each other for such a long time that I knew...

*Voice and tone sounded exactly the same as usual, but... Since my move, Ginbei’s anger gauge has been swinging like crazy.*

In reality my friend had already said that themselves.

Gin had properly responded to any suggestions I proposed and cooperated whenever I had asked for help voluntarily.

*However, that means Ginbei’s anger has completely dissolved.*

To put it simple, it’s not an overstatement that Sawatori Ginbei Haruomi was able to contain complete objectiveness in action and emotion. Because of that, my friend was able to always choose the best solution right on the spot.

*Even though almost everything I do doesn’t even compare to Ginbei – that point specifically amazes me every time.*

*Calm, no matter what, yet no one’s more zealous than Gin.*

For exactly that reason, I couldn’t help but be worried.

*When’s Ginbei’s mood going to improve?*

*What could I do to improve it?*

At the moment, I had an innumerable amount of silly worries in my head. Though my greatest worry was what one of the few friends I had was going to do.

I mean *that* person, I really had no idea what that person was gonna do.

Well, there was no helping it, right? I had proceeded with my plans in total secret, not discussing a single detail with anyone. That should’ve cost me my credibility as a friend, but Ginbei still insisted that it had not affected our friendship.

However, if I may borrow the words of none other than my friend, ‘Bein’ angry and forgivin’ are two different things’.

Okay.

*I already thought about visiting Ginbei and bringing that beloved cake with me, though. I wonder if it’d be better to just send it over quickly. Gin probably wouldn’t like it if I tried some manipulation so obviously, but that’s the only thing I’m really capable of right now—*

“Onii-chan, are you finished with your phone call?”

I heard my sister’s voice.

It came from outside the door.

While I was using the living room phone, my sister had considered my feelings and waited outside the room for a while.

“Ah, sorry. It’s fine, you can come in.”

I called out laying down on the tatami mat.

I knew it was a slovenly thing to do, but I was worn out from the conversation earlier.

That kind of behavior would’ve been unacceptable at the Takanomiya residence, but she was my one and only family, so please overlook it this time.

“——!”

I reflexively shot up straight.

On the other side of the door, my sister had sat down in a formal manner while wearing a kimono that I wasn’t familiar with.

“—————”

She silently bowed like that.

Then she slidingly crossed over the doorframe with her knees and quietly shut the door.

After getting close to me, she once again bowed.

“...What’s that? What’s up with those clothes all of a sudden?”

“Are you surprised?”

Then I said to my sister who had raised her head and stuck out her tongue:

“Well, yeah of, course I am. That’s surely a surprise attack. I mean, didn’t you leave all your kimonos and other stuff in the Arisugawa residence?”

“Yes, that’s what I had intended. However, Shouko-san said, ‘Take this little something with you at least’, without listening to anything I was saying. So I borrowed this kimono that was forced upon me.”

“Hm. I see.”

Now that I think about it, this had been the first time that I’ve seen my sister dressed up properly and courteously. I hadn’t seen my sister in a kimono for at least those six years, last at her shichi-go-san<sup>[1]</sup>.

“That’s great then. It really suits you.”

“Ehehe. Thank you very much.”

“...And? I know where the clothes came from now, but why are you wearing them to begin with?”

“It’s for ‘imitate the kind of person you want to become’. I felt that I could surely



convey as much as possible of my feelings this way.”

“Hm?”

“Moreover, tomorrow is the opening ceremony. I think it’s the perfect occasion... Above all else, if I kept delaying this, I’d feel like I may never get another chance to tell you this.”

My sister said, placed three fingers on the floor and lowered her head, performing a very formal bow.



“Onii-chan. I’m truly thankful for everything you’ve done to establish our current situation. As your little sister – no, more than that, as a person I want to deeply and humbly express my gratitude to you.”

“...What the heck?”

I was shocked when I glimpsed at her pure white nape through her collar.

While putting on a bitter smile to try to hide that, I kept a calm appearance and opened my mouth.

"You're so strange. I've wondered why you've dressed in those unusual clothes and are acting so formal. What's going on? Why are you thanking me?"

"I'm truly thankful to you for taking me away from the Arisugawas. I'm thankful for being able to live with you like this. I'm truly thankful for how you've raised like a parent would."

"Hahaha. So that's what it is."

I let out a small chuckle towards my sister who had her head deeply bowed.

"Isn't it only natural for me to do that? There's no reason to thank me. You're my little sister and the only family I have."

"Even if we're blood relatives, I can't just accept Onii-chan's grace like it was nothing. Not to mention who-knows-how-much trouble Onii-chan went through to give me all this... I might now appear like this, but up until a while ago I was a member of the Arisugawa family, so of course I can understand how difficult it must've been."

"Raise your head."

"I won't. We've been living together for these 13 days now. I haven't been able to properly say how thankful I am until this day. Until I've properly conveyed my gratitude, I can't raise my head."

...*Oh boy.*

I sighed inside my head.

*Can't be helped. If it's like this, I guess I've to let my sister finish.*

Rather than just feeling happy that I've finally met up with her again, I thought that my debt to her was quite large nonetheless, as I had made her wait for such a long time. But it seemed as if my sister's view on things was elementary different from mine.

"...And also, the truth is..."

Slightly shaking towards the end of her sentence, she looked like she was forcing her words out.

"I must apologize to Onii-chan."

"Apologize, why?"

"That I've doubted Onii-chan."

"Doubted?"

"Yes. Six years ago, at the time we were separated, Onii-chan had asked something of me, right? 'I'll definitely come and take you back someday, believe in me and become a good girl', you said."

"Yeah, I said that."

“Of course I didn’t doubt you at first. If it was something Onii-chan said, then it couldn’t be wrong, surely he’d come to get me soon, I had thought.”

It wasn’t just towards the end of her sentences.

Now that I was paying close attention, my sister’s slim shoulders were shaking too.

They were quivering repeatedly, like a child that was startled from a lightning strike.

“But one month passed, then half a year, and finally a whole. From there a second year, then the third, and a fourth year passed by. I had no longer been a child around then, I was able to distinguish between the possible and the impossible. I had already come to understand what kind of place the Arisugawa and Takanomiya households were. I had forgotten about the Onii-chan who’d come for me to take me back. I couldn’t even exchange honest letters with Onii-chan.”

“...”

“In the beginning, the only thing I thought about was Onii-chan. But before I knew it, there’d be days where I didn’t. Whenever I became aware of those days, I felt like the blood in my body was flowing wrongly, it was heartrending and unbearable. On top of this, Kyotsugu-san and Shouko-san were both strict, but treated me well nonetheless. I started to think that I’d already become a member of the Arisugawa household and that it couldn’t be helped if I wouldn’t meet Onii-chan ever again. B-But I really hated m-myself for t-thinking like t-that, I felt v-very u-uneasy and h-hopeless——”

“Akiko.”

“Yes.”

“Are you crying?”

“I’m not crying!”

\*sniff\*

The sound of sniffing.

“Isn’t that crying?”

“I’m not crying!”

“Those are things of the past. All of what you’ve just said.”

I pondered about what to say and continued toward my very formally sitting sister:

“It’s not like everything has been solved, of course, but right now you’re here – and so am I. That’s all that’s important now. It doesn’t matter what path we took to get here. Don’t you think so?”

“I do. I think so, but—”

“Besides, if Akiko’s apologizing, then so must I.”

“Eh?”

She unintentionally raised her head and then hurriedly lowered it again.

“There were times when I couldn’t help but feel anxious too. Whether you were really waiting for me or not. The few letters we exchanged had been censored, so there was no way to know if those words were really what Akiko intended. That’s why even though I’ve spent those six years for our reunion, I didn’t have any confidence. Is Akiko really waiting for me? Is that attempted reunion just going to annoy her? Is Akiko already living a plentiful life as one of the Arisugawa with no need for me? I’ve thought things like that.”

“Impossible! How could something like that ever happen?!”

My sister raised her head and yelled with all her heart.

But right after that, she suddenly realized what she did and lowered her head yet again.

“Onii-chan... That Onii-chan’d someday come and take me back, that was the one thing that I’ve never stopped to believe. Throughout the strict discipline I’ve received, the lessons I took, all the studying I did, I was able to struggle throughout all of this because I knew that Onii-chan was watching over me from far away. I had to properly follow Onii-chan’s with, so that when we finally met again I could show him the fruits of my labor.”

“Ah. I see.”

“Onii-chan. Did I satisfy your request? Did I grow up to become a good girl just like Onii-chan has asked me to...?”

“Of course.”

I nodded my head without any hesitation.

“You did everything I asked you to properly. Just like I wished, you’ve grown up to become a good girl.”

“Really...?”

“That’s what I really think from the bottom of my heart. I’m not exaggerating here. And that’s why I think I can be really proud to call you my sister. Even more so than back then you’re my little sister that I really take pride on. On top of that——”

“On top of that?”

“Even more than back then, you’ve turned out to be really beautiful.”

\*thump\*

I heard such a sound.

“Wh-Wh-Wh——”

Her ears turned deep red all of a sudden— Still sitting in a bow with three fingers on the floor, my sister’s voice started to tremble.

"What do you think you're saying?!"

"Eh?"

Why had she become angry? I was perplexed.

"It's just like it sounds. It's what you're always asking me to say. 'Please say that I'm beautiful' or 'Please say I'm cute', right?"

"W-Well that might be true, but...!"

"I really *do* think you *are* beautiful. Even more than six years ago... Ah, could it be that Akiko doesn't feel the same?"

"No! I don't think differently at all! So that I'd be ready for the day when I met Onii-chan, I've neglected my endeavors to improve myself not even once!"

"If that's the case then it's okay, isn't it? Just accept the compliment."

"I-I'm happy to hear that, but... a surprise attack like that's really troubles me!"

*What a troublesome person she is.*

"Well, anyway, that's just how it is. Isn't it about time you raised your head?"

"I can't!"

"Why not? Aren't you satisfied now? I've heard all your gratitude and thanks, right? Aren't you fine with that?"

"No, I'm already satisfied."

"Then why not? Why can't you raise your head?"

"B-BECAUSE I'M OBVIOUSLY EMBARRASSED!"

My sister almost screamed.

"I don't even need to look into the mirror to know how blushed my face is. I'm smiling so stupidly that it'd disgust anyone. This expression's one I definitely mustn't show to anyone. I'd rather die than show Onii-chan such a thing, to say the least."

"It's fine, don't worry about it. We're the only family we have, right? 'There shouldn't be secrets between siblings!', it's you who keeps saying that, right? And you're still going to hide your face from me nonetheless?"

"T-This and that are two separate matters—"

"I really want to see it. Your face."

"...Uuuu~"

Still hiding it, she gave a reproachful groan.

My sister raised her head slowly and nervously.

"..."

Her eyebrows reminded me of the character '八', and her lips were squeezed together tightly. On top of that, she had her shoulders hunched like a child that was about to be punished.

Just like she had said, her face was bright red and not just the ears like I thought earlier, but she was dyed in a deep red all the way down to her neck.

As if she wanted to say, 'I won't let our eyes meet, no matter what', her eyes were fluttering about the place.

—Ah.

*So that's how it is.*

*That's how it is after all...*

"Hey, Akiko."

"Y-Yes...?"

"You really are cute. You're the number one cutest girl in the world for me."

\*bang\*

\*thump\*

With those cliché-like sounds, my sister pitched forward and collapsed.

"Akiko?"

"..."

"Oooooi~ Akikooo~ Oooooi~"

"..."

No response – like a corpse.

"There's no helping you, huh...?"

*Maybe she got overwhelmed by embarrassment and ascended to heaven.*

*Oh well.*

*She's even redder than before, seems like she's challenging the limits of the human body. Nonetheless she keeps lying face-down persistently, just so that I can't see it.*

*But I should reflect upon myself too.*

*I might've went overboard there. I regret that.*

"...But I mean, it's rare for her to show me this cute side. Not taking advantage of it would've been rude too... right?"

That wasn't directed at anyone, I was just talking to myself.

And thus I decided to appreciate my sister, who had steam rising up from her body

like in a manga.

Well, if it had been something like this then I'd probably be forgiven, I thought to myself.

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**Notes**

1. '*Shichi-Go-San*': Rite of passage for children age, seven ("shichi"), five ("go"), and threww ("san").  
See on [Wikipedia](#)



# April 7th: 14th Day Living Together (Day of the Opening Ceremony)

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*Now then.*

*Or should it rather be 'at last', perhaps? Or maybe 'it's coming to a head'?*

*I've been impatiently waiting for this day, yet I also wanted it to never come.*

*St. Liliانا Academy... Today's the joyous opening ceremony.*

*"...Okay."*

I stood in front of the entranceway mirror in the 70-year-old, broken-down dorm.

I had constantly been looking at myself for a while now.

"I feel like that's not good enough somehow... I don't really know why. Does this even suit me?"

While twisting my neck, I turned my body halfway to the left.

And then turned all the way back to the right.

After thoroughly checking up on myself, I let out a small sigh.

"No good. I don't know how to pull this off... I've never worn such a thing up until now."

I was talking about St. Liliانا Academy's male uniform. It had been the traditional gakuran<sup>[1]</sup>. Using solid cloth for its material, the sturdi- and simpleness of it were certainly magnificent. However, the person who had chosen this uniform, had to compare to it.

To be honest, it looked forced on someone with average height and weight as I.

Well, let me be straight.

This uniform didn't suit me at all.

The uniform wore me.

*Ah, damn it, I've screwed it up.*

If I had known that, I would've taken some measures beforehand. If I only had worn the uniform frequently to get used to it... I mean, look, isn't it the same for university graduates that are looking for jobs? If they can show off that they've gotten used to suits and thanks to that underline their 'professionalism', it'd certainly help gaining points in the interview.

*Yup. This is bad.*

*St. Liliانا Academy's a prestigious school living up to its name.*

*'A school where young masters and noble ladies from all around the country gather to study.'*

*My little sister's the secretary of the student council...*

*As her older brother I can't run around like that.*

*I've known it ever since I've come under the care of the Takanomiyas, but... the elite of society's really fussy about reputation. If I were to show off disgraceful behavior, it would've have a direct effect on my sister's too.*

*Even though it's unlikely that I'll hurt my sister's reputation, I've to use all my power to smash the tiniest of chance that that could happen.*

"Heeey! Akiko~"

With that, I tried calling out to the person in question.

I wondered whether the really bad way this uniform looked on me was still within acceptable limits. I wanted her verdict too, no matter what.

"Akiko~? Heeey. Come over here for a second."

"..."

"Akiko~?"

I called out to the room where my sister should've been, but there was no response.

"Heeey, hurry up. We don't really have a lot of time and you must be busy yourself, but can you please come over here for a second?"

"..."

Still no response.

*That's strange. Usually she'd immediately stop what she's doing and answer me even if she's somewhat busy. Seems like she's having some difficulties herself.*

Thinking stuff like that, I tilted my neck.

"...Onii-chan."

A voice came from the other side of the door. A voice so small, that it appeared like the buzzing of a mosquito.

"To be honest, I was hiding from Onii-chan."

"Eh?"

Being bewildered at this sudden confession, I said:

"What? So you hiding from me, huh? But I mean, do we have to talk about this now? We're a bit tight on the schedule."

"Anyway, it would've come to light sooner or later."

My sister said with a subdued voice that sounded as if she had been driven into a corner and thus given up.

“Even though I knew that the day would come eventually where it’d be revealed... until now I’ve delayed it to the utmost maximum. If you find my cowardness laughable, then it’s fine to just laugh.”

“Errr, I still don’t know what you’re talking about though.”

“A serious matter. A very serious matter.”

*What’s going on?*

I suddenly started to feel anxious.

This was my sister we’re talking about, so it had probably been nothing big and I shouldn’t have thought too much into it. However, hearing her having such a serious tone made it hard on me to calm down.

“Hey, hey. Please don’t scare me like that. I’m a bit faint-hearted as you might know, so when I feel threatened like that it makes my heart cower in fear.”

“I’m sorry. But for me the feelings I’m confessing are like a leap into the dark. Please forgive me.”

“You’re awfully calm, aren’t you? ...But you know, if you’re over there anyway, why don’t you come out already? It’s a bit difficult to talk to you if I can’t see your face.”

“...I understand.”

She said timidly.

My sister came out of her room wearing her uniform. Well, I thought she’d come out, but she suddenly retreated back into it like a small fish hunted by a predator.

“Akiko?”

“...Um, Onii-chan.”

“What?”

“...You won’t laugh?”

“Eh? Laugh? What do you mean?”

“Nothing at all. Anyhow, please promise me that you won’t laugh, no matter what.”

“Ah... Well, it doesn’t matter to me. Sure.”

*What does she mean? What with this ‘please don’t laugh’ act?*

*Just what in the world’s she going to reveal here?*

“You promised... Okay?”

She scraped these words together with a frightened voice.

My sister's figure nervously showed itself.

"...?"

I tilted my head to the side.

*Eh?*

*What?*

*What has she been so anxious about?*

There wasn't anything strange about her, not even mentioning anything that could be laughable.

If I had to name something then that my sister was currently wearing glasses and had her bangs pulled up. But it couldn't have been just that, right? I mean, certainly, this was the first time I had seen her wearing those, but it couldn't possibly be that alone... right?"



"I-I understand that this look doesn't suit me at all."

Her face turned bright red and she averted her eyes.

She looked like she couldn't bear standing there any longer, her body was fidgeting all around while she continued with:

"If it were possible, I'd've liked to conceal this my entire life. But at the academy

everyone knows that I'm wearing glasses. No matter how you look at it, trying to hide something like that would've been impossible."

"..."

*Seems like it's been that after all.*

"Akiko."

"Y-Yes?"

"Your eyes, are they bad?"

"That's correct. In a short timespan they suddenly went bad."

My sister had a terribly regretful expression.

"The truth is, even these glasses appear to be a bit too low. But if I switched to thicker lenses, it'd look even weirder. So that's my so-called limit right now."

"..."

"Um, I'm sorry. It seems I've asked something absurd of Onii-chan after all. If anyone saw a strange-looking figure like this, they'd naturally want to laugh... I'm sorry, Onii-chan. It's actually fine if you laughed at me. It must be painful for you to endure such an unreasonable request, so..."

"Ah. No, I mean..."

Then I gave my honest thoughts to my sister who was smiling self-deprecatingly while she had said those words.

"They don't look weird on you at all. Don't they rather suit you quite well?"

"That's a lie!"

She glared at me with teary eyes sharply.

"It's fine, you don't need to try and make me feel better. I mean, I'm wearing such an unnatural thing on my face, after all. Despite that you're saying it's not weird? ... There's no way that could be true."

*How rude.*

*Apologize to all the glasses-wearing girls in this country and to their fans as well!*

"If you find glasses that unpleasant, why aren't you wearing contacts then?"

"I couldn't ever do such a frightening thing like putting a foreign object into my eye."

"But I mean, really, I've never seen you wearing glasses before. You managed hiding that and leading your life as if it was nothing. Hasn't that been quite troublesome?"

"So that I wouldn't get found out, I put in a great amount of effort. For instance, I practiced how to appear like I could see something that I actually couldn't."

"Those great efforts were obviously for naught... By the way, that aside, take a look

at my uniform. I'm a bit troubled about how bad it looks on me, what do you think? What could I do about that?"

"...? What in the world are you talking about? It suits you very well."

"Is that so? I can't really see how it could look good though..."

"That's a foolish thing to say. I mean, if it's Onii-chan, then no matter what he's wearing, it'll always suit him."

"..."

Yep.

*Seems like my super-bro-con sister isn't fit to give me advice on this. Our aesthetic senses seem to be way too different to begin with.*

"Well, forget that. I really do think they're cute, you know? Those glasses."

"It's fine already, Onii-chan. I've given up on this point of mine by now. Even if the Onii-chan I dearly love says something like, 'They're cute', I can't be honestly delighted by it... I'm sorry, even though you've finally made up your mind to compliment me."

"Errr, that was what I truly thought, though, you know?"

"Anyway, I'll try to not wear eyeglasses in front of Onii-chan as much as I can. So I hope you can somehow forgive me this terrible appearance for now."

"But you know, that's dangerous, isn't it? Not wearing glasses even though your eyesight's bad."

"That's something I've taken into account."

"You're worrying me. If something dangerous was to happen to you, what am I supposed to do?"

"Even with that, it's inexcusable, but... I'm sorry, my resolution won't sway."

"A ball flying at you or a car that goes hurtling towards you. You can't see all those things, that's considerably scary, you know?"

"Even if it's from my beloved Onii-chan, I won't listen to anything pertaining to this matter!"

"But – I mean..."

Since she was being so obstinate to turn a deaf ear towards me, I tried a change of strategy.

"If you don't wear your glasses, then how can you see the face of your so-called 'beloved Onii-chan'?"

"The critical spot!"

Giving off a scream, my sister collapsed onto the floor.

“...That’s right, it’s exactly that. I’m totally at a loss as to what to do about that... I don’t want Onii-chan to see me wearing glasses, but if I don’t wear them I can’t see Onii-chan... This dilemma of mine that I’ve been keeping secret, from now on it seems like I’ll have to just bear with it. I fear that’s something I’ll have to live with for the rest of my life.”

“Errr, if it’s going to be like that then why don’t you just wear your glasses?”

“It’s unpleasant.”

“You want to see my face clearly, though, right?”

“That’s true... However, think about it carefully, if I’m constantly staring at Onii-chan, couldn’t I die from my heart beating too fast?”

“There’s no such thing!”

“Also, there’s a more simple solution. It’d be better for Onii-chan to just bring his face closer to mine. If you’re constantly next to me during our days, sleeping together with me, waking up together... Look, like this everything’s solved, right?”

“If I stick close to you for even one day it’d bring various problems to my life.”

“If possible I’d like us to be at a distance where our lips can touch.”

“Don’t keep talking as if I’d stick my face that close to yours! Anyway, I won’t do anything like that.”

“Don’t be so cold! At least let us be separated by a piece of glass!”

“No. If you wear your glasses then this discussion’s resolved, so make sure to properly wear them from now on. Understood?”

“Uu...”

“That’s an order from Onii-chan, alright? Got it?”

“Uuuuuu~”

Even though my little sister was groaning with tears in her eyes and scowling at me, she seemed to have given up before long. She sighed and said:

“...I understand. If Onii-chan says that it’d be unpleasant for him, then I can’t object. From now on I’ll try and wear my glasses as often as I can... However.”

“However?”

“When it’s just the two of us, I won’t wear my them.”

“Why?”

“I want to show off the cutest possible side of me when I’m near Onii-chan. For my beloved Onii-chan that’s the minimum courtesy I must show as a woman. That’s the one thing I won’t yield in.”

“Hmph.”



She was saying cryptic stuff as usual.

“I understand, that’s fine. You’ll wear your glasses when you’re going about your daily life and when it’s just the two of us, you won’t. Okay?”

“Yes. I don’t mind it like that. Onii-chan doesn’t mind it this way either, right?”

“Ah, like that I can compromise with it. When it comes to just you and me – whether it’s a ball or a car, I’ll definitely protect you.”

“Hau...”

My sister’s body suddenly started to shake uncontrollably.

“A-Another love attack I didn’t see coming... But I must bear with it. If I’ve a nose bleed every time something like that happens and collapse, it’ll hurt my honor as a young lady. And, I mean, it’d be a terrible thing if I were to die from excessive blood loss...”

“What are you muttering about? Look, it’s about time we get going, we really don’t have much time.”

Even though I originally had planned to give myself plenty of time to get to the opening ceremony on my first day as a transfer student, it seemed like all my planning had gone to nothing. The matter with my uniform hadn’t been settled either.

*Oh well, it’s fine.*

The small bit of nervousness I kept feeling had come undone because of this happening just now.

And anyway, we couldn’t keep worrying about every little thing.

I’d have to deal with things like I did before, it’d be my everyday life from now on after all.

That’s right.

Just like I had declared in the beginning.

This story...

This is a story about the peaceful, trouble-free daily life of an older brother and a younger sister who were separated for a while because of certain circumstances and then unexpectedly reunited to live under the same roof again. With that said, we’re done with the introduction and can carry on with my uninteresting story.

No more, no less.

From now on, I had to steadily live my peaceful everyday life.

I had to give it all my heart, work myself to the bone, and devote myself to give it my very best.

Because I had put in a great deal of effort to get where I was right then.

“Now then, let’s get pumped up and head out!”

Letting out a fighting shout, I vigorously opened the front door.

Because today was the first day that I’d charge head-first into that new, brilliant everyday life of mine.



*...I was so enthusiastic on my way to school and yet...*

“It seems like we meet again.”

St. Liliana Academy, front gate.

Going against the stream of students, kind of like a salmon – born and raised to swim upstream against the flow – she walked through the archway towards my sister and me.

Then she called out to me like she usually did.

“I’ve prepared myself in advance, and yet you’ve brilliantly managed to shock me regardless, our school uniform really doesn’t suit you in the slightest. Even if we consider that you’re not used to this new uniform, it’s still hard for me to believe how much it mismatches you. Maybe I should call it a yet undiscovered ability of mankind. This precious talent of which there’s no other in the world, make sure to treasure and develop it for all the world to see.”

“Tch... It’s been how many days since we’ve met each other? And that’s the first thing you say?!”

*I should’ve fixed this up before I left the house! Just so that she can’t have anything to nitpick me about!*

“Please don’t worry about it too much.”

And with her usual pokerface, she continued:

“There’s no real meaning to it, I’m just pointlessly picking a fight with you. I was hoping you’d realize that I didn’t really mean anything when I said that.”

“Ah, that so? If that’s the case then fine. But, well, I’m actually aware that this uniform doesn’t suit me...”

“There’s no need to say such a thing. It suits you like a bodybuilding champion’s suited to wink at a camera wearing a miniskirt.”

“...In short, there’s nothing in this world that’d look worse than I do?”

*Wait, did she hope that I’d catch on or did she only diss me here?*

*Well, let's leave it at that.*

It was Nasuhara Anastasia.

"Good morning, Nasuhara-san."

"Ana's fine."

"Ah, that's right. Good morning, Ana-san."

"Fuu. To think that you'd call a woman your hole. How befitting of a man like you."

"...You're really keen to keep that up, aren't you?"

*Business as usual. Well, I'm already used to it.*

*I'm kinda shocked, yet honestly happy about it.*

*At any rate, this academy's a place that puts me completely to awe. I've only been here for a few days, but I already have an acquaintance. That's something amazing of its own. Not to mention that being greeted and called by her like this made me really happy.*

*...\*Sigh\*, I'm really a timid person, huh?*

*Even though I one of my closest friends – my sister – is already at the school... Even with that I've still been somewhat nervous. For a transfer student I'm already blessed enough.*

*Actually, my sister's been awfully quiet – As I was thinking that I, turned my head to look at her.*

"DO-DO-DO-DO-DO..."

...It didn't seem like she was repeating the 'Do' from 'Do-Re-Mi'.

My sister's eyes were blazing and her mouth gaping wide open. Her body trembled all over, she looked at Nasuhara-san and I, she then said:

"DON'T JUST MOVE ON WITHOUT GIVING ME AN EXPLANATION WHAT THE MEANING OF ALL THIS IS, ONII-CHAN!"

"Explaining the meaning of all this? The meaning of all what?"

"Why are you acting so friendly with *that* person?!"

*Ah.*

*I see, that's what she's talking about.*

"What do you mean by 'that person'? Are you perhaps acquainted with Nasuhara-san?"

"No, she's a complete stranger!"

"There's no way that's possible. Just look at how you've reacted right now."

“Anyway!”

She said with a ‘Fuuu~’ and let out an intimidating growl while separating Nasuhara-san and I.

“Please don’t go near my Onii-chan, vice president!”

*Hm?*

*Vice president?*

“There’s no need for you to be so rude, is there?”

Nasuhara-san continued on with a cool and composed expression:

“There’s no need to concern yourself on how your elder brother and I came to know each other. No matter in what way or manner him and I met, it doesn’t concern you in the slightest. Even if you’re his blood-related sister. Don’t you think so too? Attending the same school as me while you’re shorter, have a smaller chest, lower grades, and a lower position than me in the student council, Arisugawa Akiko-san?”

“Please don’t try to blend in slander while giving me an explanation! And that all of this is true as well makes me even more angry!”

“Well then, could you please step aside?”

“I don’t want to! No matter how correct you are, I still don’t want you to get close to my Onii-chan!”

“Now, now, Akiko.”

I decided to step in there.

“You might have your reasons, but can you please calm down for now? Everyone’s staring at us.”

“Onii-chan doesn’t know what kind of a heinous person she is, that’s why Onii-chan can still say things like that so easily!”

With that my sister turned a deaf ear on me.

“In the first place, my height and chest size aren’t that much different from hers, okay?! Concerning the test scores I’m only one or two places behind her! She’s constantly, *constantly* nagging me about it nonetheless!”

“It’s the truth that I’m always superior in everything, though.”

Even though my sister brought up a specific example, Nasuhara-san seemed to just glaze over it.

“Or perhaps the point that I always manage to come out on top, even if only by a whisker, exemplifies all the more that there’s a wall between us which you can’t ever overcome? Don’t you think so? Position-that-is-lower-than-vice-president secretary Arisugawa Akiko-san?”

“Secretary’s a position that’s just as splendid! In the first place, don’t you always

neglect the student council meetings? And yet you're the vice president of the student council!"

"I can still accomplish my responsibilities as the vice president even without attending the student council meetings. The job of the vice president at our school is to assist the president by offering advice on certain matters. And as you know, our current president's super capable and an ultra dictator. So there's no need for an advisor. Also, you're a member of the student council too, so you should be plenty aware of that, right? Don't you think that singling out my attendance rate's perhaps a bit unreasonable?"

*...Looks like those two don't get along at all.*

*But this seems to be it, I finally understand.*

*My sister and Nasuhara-san – the reason for their somewhat random oversensitivity to my smell must've been this.*

*They were able to recognize a lingering scent on me from each other or something. Just how bad of a relationship do these two have that they're having that kind of a reaction just from each other's scent on me. Wait, I mean, isn't their sense of smell too unbelievable for a human being?!*

*Anyway, that's at least proof that the suspicions about my body odor were all false. That's a load off my mind...*

"Ah, mou<sup>[2]</sup>! Why do you always retort to everything I say!"

It didn't look like my sister'd join in on my innocent-after-all party.

"Onii-chan! Onii-chan!"

"I can hear you just fine, you know, even if you don't shout like that."

"You understand now, right?! That's just how she is! That's why I told you that you mustn't get close to her!"

"I certainly recall that you were telling me that there's a person that I mustn't get close to, but I never heard anything about who said person was, you know?"

"Even Onii-chan's now retorting to all I say?! Ahh, that's all because of the bad influence from terrible vice president! The Nikkei Index<sup>[3]</sup>'s not rising, the yen value's stopped in its tracks, and we're not seeing any improvement in the current deflation, there's no doubt that all of that's her fault!"

While saying some incredibly flashy things out of pure anger, my sister glared fiercely at her blonde-haired superior with so much vigor that her eyes seemed to be on fire.

"In any case, on no account are you to get anywhere near Onii-chan! Because Onii-chan's mine and mine only!"

"I'm very sorry, but that'd be troublesome. Or rather, I believe things are going to go against your hopes from now on, unfortunately."

Saying that, Nasuhara-san turned towards me.

“Himenokouji Akito-kun.”

For the first time she had called me by my name. She then continued with:

“I’ve a request. Would you please hear me out?”

“Eh? What is it?”

And then she said with that expression of hers which ever scarcely moved:

“Please make me your woman.”

With a small bow she lowered her head.

...

...

...

“Eh?”

“Please make me your woman.”

“No, I heard you the first time. There’s no need to repeat. Ehm, but what? What do you mean by that? When you say woman, do you mean like *that* kind of woman?”

“I’m sorry. That might’ve been a bit too sudden.”

Nasuhara-san’s expression didn’t show any clear change as always.

“I’ll try and explain it a bit more. In other words, whenever you come in contact with me like earlier, I’d like it if you kept the thought that we’re lovers in the back of your head. You don’t need to give your answer right away.”

“Huh? Well. Um.”

*Uwaa.*

*That’s bad.*

I wasn’t able to keep up with all those developments. My body couldn’t, nor could my mind.

“Rather than a confession, it’s more like me asking you to accept a declaration of mine. I simply want you to have a precise and clear grasp of my thoughts. That’s all there is. So there’s no need for you to act so shocked.”

“Um... Hey, ehm... Ana-san?”

“Fuu. To think that you’d refer to a woman as a hole. How befitting of a man like you.”

“Err, well, could you please listen for a sec?”

“I see. Well?”

“Um, well, that’s... Why?”

“With ‘why’ you want me to point out the reasoning behind my confession?”

“Yeah. That’s right.”

“It’s because I love you.”

“...”

With that my brain functions ceased.

If you want to laugh – go ahead.

To be confessed to so directly, simple, suddenly, and on top of that in public... If there’s someone out there who could calmly reply in a situation like this, then I’d very much like to get to know said person—

*“<sup>[4]</sup>Wait! Wait a minute!”*

My sister’s face looked as if 90% of its life energy had been drained out and she finally barged in on our conversation like that.

*“I don’t get what you said! Oh my God... OH MY GOD! Please tell me why! Why would you do such... such a strange, unbelievable, immoral, and... AAAAHHHHH!”*

“Calm down, Akiko. Come back to Japan.”

*“<sup>[5]</sup>Kore ga ochitsuite iraremasuka! Onii-chan ni chikazuku dakedemo ikari shintou nanoni! Sonoue ko-ko-ko-ko-kokuhaku nante! Eei, kore wo misugoshiteha okemasen! Kyou koso wa ano hito to Kecchaku wo tsukenakereba!<sup>[6]</sup>”*

Translation: ‘How could I calm down like this! I can barely contain my rage seeing when seeing how close to Onii-chan she already is! On top of that she c-c-c-c-confessed to Onii-chan! Aaah, I can’t let this go any further! I’ll settle everything with her right now!’

It looked like she was so agitated that she didn’t know which language to speak here  
—

“Ahaha! Ain’t that good, not bad at all!”

I heard a familiar laughter from over there.

“I ain’t mindin’ things like that at all, this feelin’ of stuff bein’ on the edge and ‘bout to get crazy. It’s the day of the opening ceremony and we’re already havin’ a lover’s quarrel this early in the mornin’, don’t’cha think it’s wonderful? Don’t’cha?”

When I looked around, a female student pushed her way through the crowd of onlookers.

Red hair, eyepatch, Japanese sword.

With the nickname 'Predator', giving off a sense of ferocity like a leopard that strides around in the Savanna – the student council president of St. Liliانا Academy, Nikaido Arashi.

"Yo, mornin' my cute, little subordinates."

"Good morning." Nasuhara-san said, keeping her pokerface.

"...Good morning." My sister said with some wariness.

"Hmm. Ya two seem more beautiful than usual. Why's that, I wonder? Did'cha finally decide to become my lovers today? Eh?"

"I humbly decline." My sister answered immediately.

"..." As for Nasuhara-san, she completely disregarded the question.

"By the way, student council president." My sister said while increasingly flaring up and continued with, "We're in the middle of something here, so could you please leave?"

"Hey, hey, ain't'cha too cold? Why're you treatin' someone who's confessed their love to ya time 'n time again like some kinda nuisance?"

"It is not 'as if'. You're a nuisance in every way imaginable. With the president here it'll just get more complicated, so can you please leave?"

"I'll listen to ya request if ya'll be my lover."

"I humbly decline. I dislike people like you who've no decency, and I'm also not interested in relationships with women. Even more than that, I'm completely devoted to my Onii-chan."

"Kakaka. Gettin' turned down again, eh? Well, it's fine, the more difficulties, the more joy I'll feel once I've finally captured ya. Anyways—"

Saying that, Nikaido-san glanced into my direction.

...Uwa.

*She seems incredibly fascinating.*

Her roughness made her appear like a wandering ronin. Plus, her image often gave off the feel of a vulgar woman. Being looked at by eyes like that made me feel like she was tracing the outline of my back with her wet tongue.

If we're going by cuteness, then it'd definitely be my sister.

If we're going by beauty, then it'd be Nasuhara-san.

But if we're going by sex appeal, then the decisive winner'd be that person – that's the kind of feeling I got.

"Himenokouji Akito."

"Huh? Yes?"



"I henceforth declare the following order..."

The student council president said, took a piece of paper out of her cleavage, opened it up, and then continued with:

"From this day onwards, yer to be immediately appointed as a special member of the student council. That's all."

"...What?"

"Sorry, but ya have no right to refuse. 'Cause in our academy the authority of da student council president's absolute."

"No, even if you say that..."

"By the way, yer official title's 'secretary's deputy assistant'."

"So I'm basically no more than a low-rank? A position where nothing'd change even if it disappeared? Just what exactly do you want to achieve by having that position in the student council?"

"So ya can be my cub."

"I must humbly decline."

"Kakaka, don't'cha say that. What, ya could just spend yer time countin' the number of holes in the ceilin' until yer day's done."

"Hold on a second, president!"

My sister intervened.

"Just what in the world's the meaning of this?!"

"It's just as ya heard. The Onii-chan ya love so much's goin' to become my cute li'l boy from now on."

"I don't want to hear such terrible jokes! Really, just what do you think you're doing?! Asking my Onii-chan to enter the student council even though he doesn't know much about the academy yet... No matter how popular or capable you are, I just can't pardon your selfishness!"

"Don't'cha worry. That's how it always is, ya know?"

"Please don't talk of it as if it was someone else's problem! To begin with, why didn't you consult me on any of this?! It's about my Onii-chan after all!"

"Well, why don't'cha calm down and think 'bout it. Ya Onii-chan's position is 'secretary's deputy assistant', so... ya bein' the secretary and he's gonna be the secretary's subordinate. Do ya understand the meanin' of this?"

"Mumu...?"

The sullen-faced expression on my little sister loosened up a bit and she followed up with:

“Onii-chan’ll be my subordinate... So I can give Onii-chan as many orders as I want...?”

“Plus, yer older brother and yaself’ll always be together from now on. Ya’ve finally reunited and now to be separated at the academy... Don’t’cha think somethin’ like that’d make ya a bit lonely?”

“Mumumumu...”

“And also, with ya Onii-chan bein’ a student council member, I’ll be able to have mah younger lover at hand at all times too. It’s like killin’ three birds with one stone.”

“Hold on a second! I was almost accepting your proposal for a second there, but that last point’s unacceptable to—”

“Student council president.”

Saying that, Nasuhara-san, who had been silently watching over all the events that had been unfolded, raised her hand and then continued with:

“I object. Himenokouji Akito’s a man I’ve already set my eyes on. Are you saying those things deliberately even though you know that?”

“Yep, I knew that, vice prez.”

“If that’s the case, then please give up on him. I’d appreciate it if someone like you who already has an amount of lovers one can’t even count with both hands and yet still feels that her harem’s lacking members for some reason, would use some discretion when choosing another person to add to said harem.”

“It’s pointless askin’ that, ya know? If another woman’s already set her eyes on a man that I’ve become interested in and I’d just be like ‘oh well’ ‘n give up, it’d tarnish mah honor as a woman, ya know?”

“Is that so? I understand, student council president. I must see you as my enemy then. I don’t want to, but unfortunately this is something I’m unwilling to concede on.”

“Kakaka, good, good. I like that stuff, ya know? Bein’ so in love that it’s stiflin’, bein’ head over heels for someone, that’s surely what every woman wants. Since I happen ta be a woman too, it ain’t nothin’ but natural for me to desire that too. The cherry petals are fallin’ today, I think it’s the perfect day we settled everythin’, and most of all, this stage seems to be quite suitable, don’t’cha—”

“H-Hold on a second! Please stop for a second!”

My sister let out a wail and tried to get in control of the situation.

She stepped in and objected for me, whose veto in the matter was completely ignored – that was of course not the case. Rather than that she continued with:

“Please stop saying things as you please, you two! Ever since the time of his birth, Onii-chan’s been my Onii-chan! He’s already been reserved, no, rather the escrow’s already been closed on him! Saying those things now’ll have no effect on—”

“What’cha talkin’ ‘bout?”

“Just what are you talking about?”

The president and vice president’s voices cut in cleanly.

“You and him are blood-related, aren’t you? You should’ve no reason to barge in on us, correct?”

“I know that’cha thinkin’ very high of yer brother. But it’s a bit unreasonable for ya to stick yer nose into that kinda matters, don’t’cha think?”

“T-There’s no such thing! The love between Onii-chan and I’s not that—”

“Could you guys hold on for a sec?”

The one who stopped them wasn’t me.

Of course it wasn’t Nasuhara-san or Nikaido-san either. Nor was it the misfortunate sister of mine.

“I’d appreciate if you could lemme join in on the conversation.”

“————?”

I heard a voice which I shouldn’t hear from a person who shouldn’t be here.

A figure appeared from a gap in the increasingly rowdier crowd.

“Gin?!”

“Yo, Akito. Been a while, hasn’t it?”

I hadn’t been mistaken.

Very un-Japanese silver hair made into a short bob. Blue-green eyes. A slender, child-like figure.



There was no mistake that it was my very esteemed friend who should be in Kyoto, Sawatari Ginbei Haruomi.

“Wait, what are you doing here?! I mean, what’s up with those clothes?!”

“Ah, you mean these?”

My good friend suddenly raised the hem of the skirt.

"Pretty good design, don't you think? I'm very pleased."

"Not that! I mean why're you wearing St. Liliana Academy's uniform?!"

"That's not like you to play dumb, is it, Akito? At St. Liliana Academy there are people who wear this. So there's only one possibility, right?"

"...You transferred schools?"

"Exactly, Akito."

Showing me a sly chuckle, Ginbei closed one of her eyes.

"I've come without fail to get my revenge. You, of course, haven't forgotten 'bout it, right?"

Ah.

*I've said something like that, right.*

*Something like that she'd pay me back twice-fold, that she'd prepare for a proper full-scale review of my actions, and that before long she'd come to visit.*

"I swear... Just what part of that is 'playful revenge'? I think my heart stopped there for a second. Gimme a break, please."

"Yep. First of all, I wanted to scare you so much that your very foundation's shakin'. If it didn't, my ruse would've been for naught."

"One of your bad points is that you like pulling pranks."

"No need to worry 'bout it. By and large the target of my pranks was mostly you."

"That's even worse! I mean, didn't you say stuff like, 'Won't you come back here?', over and over again? So all of that was a bluff... Ah, I give up, that's just how you are..."

"H-Hold on a second! Please stop there!"

At that point, my suddenly flustered sister jumped in:

"Onii-chan, is that the person that you had talked about the other day...?"

"Ah, sorry, let me introduce you. That's Sawatari Ginbei Haruomi, a good friend of mine. At the Kyoto residence – when I was with the Takanomiyas – we got along quite well. It's just like you heard, it seems that from today on Ginbei'll be a student of this academy. Well, now that I think about it... Gin comes from a pretty complicated household, you shouldn't have been able to transfer schools that easily and in such a short time—"

"No, I understand that part, but there's something more important besides that!"

"Ah, yeah, yeah. Ginbei's actually of Scandinavian descent even though the name suggests otherwise. The appearance doesn't quite tell but Gin's completely Japanese

by heart, it's just that there were certain family circumstances that caused—”

“Not that! Although I’m a bit interested in that part, there’s something even more important!”

“Something even more important?”

“Your friend – Ginbei’s a *girl*, you know?!”

“Eh?”

...*Ah*.

*I see.*

That had been careless of me.

For me it has been something obvious, I might’ve left out an explanation on that part.

Going by her name and way of talking, one might think that she was some houseboy from the Meiji era, but Sawatari Ginbei Haruomi was a full-fledged woman.

Well, she had good looks and personality, she could sometimes be a bit too suspicious of things, but that had probably been caused by her family circumstances and such—

“Now then.”

*Well, that’s been said, so please don’t worry about it too much.*

Then my close friend put on that slightly cynical smile she was known for and faced both Nasuhara-san and Nikaido-san.

“Pleased to meet you, esteemed *acquaintances* of Akito. Although it might look like this, Akito’s and mine relationship’s rather close. I’ve no intention to behave like a sister-in-law, but I find it kinda hard to just shut my eyes in front of this ownership debate.”

“Whoa now, Ginbei.”

She started off rather harsh with that people she was meeting for the first time. If I wouldn’t cut in here, things’d turn for the ugly.

“Why are you getting so belligerent all of a sudden? I mean, you’re in my shoes here – well, no, actually you’re in worse shoes, you don’t have anyone you know in this academy, right? You should try and get on good terms with everyone, it’s a rare opportunity.”

“True that. However, I can’t concede in this kinda situation. Like that, there are things I won’t stand down in and things I’m unable to hold myself back from.”

“...I see. Ehm, okay.”

As Gin drew that conclusion with a strong tone, I was embarrassed but also moved.

I continued with heartfelt admiration:

"Thank you, Ginbei. For all you've done for me. You've always been like that, huh? Always worrying about me and now you even went as far as transferring schools for me. You've ignored all my objections and came to put a halt to all of this. I'm truly grateful. I'm honored to have a friend like you."

"...Yare, yare."

Despite my speech, Ginbei sighed for some reason and shook her head.

And then, with a stunned expression on her face, she muttered:

"You're always treatin' me so cruelly. When a girl goes to the far-off east on her own chasin' after someone, just what do you think that means? I guess this proves that denseness isn't curable. You're a pretty good example for that, if I do say so myself. Well, that's just the way Akito is, I guess..."

"Eh? What? I couldn't hear you very well."

"It's nothing. I was just talking to myself. Anyways, I'm—"

"Hahaha. Good, ain't it? So good!"

With that, Nikaido-san cut in with a hearty laugh.

"Seems things are gettin' more and more interestin', aren't they? Well, well, fact is, I love exactly that kinda development... 'N all of that this early in the day of the opening ceremony... It's effing wonderful!"

Seemingly pleased, she stretched her shoulder and then looked around.

Nasuhara Anastasia.

Sawatari Ginbei Haruomi.

She surveyed them in that order and continued:

"What mah lover said aside, three beautiful women in a similar situation meet – just like destiny. Anyways, this talk ain't somethin' that'd be done in a day or two. Let's put the freakin' talk for later. Some female bondin' will come first... What'cha thinkin'? Eh?"

"That sounds good."

Nasuhara-san nodded her head in agreement.

"We're mutual enemies. I'm not sure if there'd be any gain if we deepened our relationships. I, however, agree that there's no benefit in fighting right now."

"I'm also agreein'."

Ginbei also voiced her agreement and continued:

"I'm a freshman and don't know much about here. I tried to prepare for the lessons as good as I could, but this academy has some unwritten, peculiar rules and manners I gotta follow, right? Facin' that fact, I'd totally appreciate any help and instruction I can get."

“Kay, ain’t we good to go then?”

The smile on her face grew increasingly more profound and so Nikaido-san clapped both of her hands together.

“Gotta leave this stuff here alone for now. Aight, let’s put the formalities aside and go for a drink, let’s all exchange drinks together while we’re at it. Like that, it’ll be the fastest way to deepen our friendship, don’t’cha think?”

“President, what are you going to do about the opening ceremony?”

“Didn’t I just say we’re puttin’ the formalities aside, vice prez? We’ll skip it, of course.”

“So you’re sayin’ we should skip a formal event and go drink Sake... Kinda shockin’ to hear somethin’ like that at, as far as I’ve heard, a leading prestigious school.”

“Hahaha. What’cha sayin’, Ginbei-san? I can’t remember mentionin’ anythin’ ’bout Sake. ‘N anyway, the most important thing here’s to have a full-fledged life. People who can’t who can’t do anythin’ but to study aren’t fit for this academy. When it’s time to work, then work. When it’s time to let loose, though, ya gotta let loose. Ya need to know how to balance those two with skill, ya know?”

Somehow it seemed like the matter had been resolved.

“Alright, now that that’s settled... strike the iron while it’s hot! Let’s head for the student council room at once—”

“STOOOOOOOOOP! STOP, STOP, STOP!”

Well, she probably had the right to cut in by now.

My completely ignored sister finally got enough of all of this and let out a yell.

“Hold on a second! Just because I remained silent doesn’t mean you can just keep me out of this! Why wasn’t I asked to take part in such an important conversation?! No matter how you look at it, it’s beyond weird, isn’t it?!”

“What’cha talkin’ ’bout?”

“What are you going on about?”

“What are you talkin’ about?”

Nikaido-san, Nasuhara-san, and Ginbei-san.

All three of their voices rang clearly.

“Haven’t we talked ’bout this earlier? Yer Himenokouji Akito’s little sister, aren’t’cha?”

“I believe I said from the start that your inclusion hasn’t to be considered at all. Things would only get complicated if you joined in, so please keep yourself out of this.”

“You’re Akito’s little sister. I wanna respect your opinion as much as I can. But you need to know your place. You understand, right?”

“It’s not like that!”



My sister fought back desperately.

"The love between Onii-chan and I is the real deal! In the face of our true love, taboos don't mean a thing! Something like blood-relationship is nothing but a trivial matter!"

"That's absurd, don't'cha think?" Nikaido-san said.

"That trivial matter's something pretty decisive, don't you agree?" Nasuhara-san said.

"Please have some common sense." Ginbei-san said.

"That's not how it is! It's not like that!"

My currently overwhelmingly disadvantaged sister looked like a child which was about ready to cry and continued with:

"The bond between Onii-chan and I is nothing like that! Since we were born we've always been – with the exception of the time we were separated due to our families – we've always been together! The time we've spent together isn't just for show! Onii-chan has protected me from bullies, he ate the celery I didn't like, on nights I couldn't sleep he'd lay in bed with me until I fell asleep after all – and also, he honored his promise to find a way for us to live together again! It's only natural for me to have my emotions sprout beyond what siblings could have!"

"If ya ain't pretendin', then..."

While shrugging her shoulders, Nikaido-san continued:

"...why don't'cha try askin' ya older brother himself? That'd settle things way faster."

"A-Ask Onii-chan?"

It seemed like it was my turn again after a long period of silence.

Nikaido-san, Nasuhara-san, and Ginbei.

Their gazes were focused on me.

"Onii-chan...?"

I stared directly back into her eyes.

I started speaking slowly, so that I wouldn't fumble with my words.

"You're a good girl, you know?"

"R-Really...?"

"Really. You're obedient, honest, and cheerful – you listen to everything I say, and you do things without me even asking. If you're not a good girl, then who is?"

"So I've lived up to Onii-chans expectations...?"

"Of course. You did way beyond my expectations. And you're not only a good girl, you're a cute one as well."

"Really?!"

“Really. Your smile’s cute. And it’s cute that whenever you laugh, your teeth are showing. How your eyes give off that slightly vivid yet soft feel is cute, and how your bangs collect in uniform just like a straight line – it’s cute as well. Your energetic way to walk’s cute, how your back’s perfectly straight when you sit’s cute. And how you easily start sulking’s cute, and so’s the way you quickly recover your sunny nature. I’ve always treasured you.”

“Wawa— Saying something like that, wawa—”

“I love you, Akiko.”

“I-I love you as well! I, too, have always loved Onii-cha—”

“Although it’s still nothing more than the love of an older brother for his younger sister.”

“UWAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA.”

Her sparkling expression changed completely.

An expression of despair showed on my sister’s face, somewhat like manga characters you’d see with that glass mask<sup>[7]</sup> expression.

“Onii-chan, you dummy! Meanie! I don’t care anymore! Fumyaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

She ran off crying.

...Hm.

*Did I overdo it?*

*Ah well, it’s fine. It was just a somewhat harsher scolding.*

*Hopefully denying my sister’s bro-con-ness in public like this won’t cause any unexpected consequences in our school lives.*

*Or wait, where’s she running off anyway? The opening ceremony’s about to start, isn’t it?*

“And that’s that, ain’t it?”

Nikaido-san said with a face by which one could tell that she didn’t really care about this small incident at all.

“Let’s go someplace else. The student council room has everythin’ we need. It’s mah fortress, ya know? ...Alright, bystanders, show’s over. Break it up, break it up, yer not gonna be in time for the openin’ ceremony, aight?”

“I don’t believe that this is something you should say when you’re about to skip the opening ceremony yourself. However, this time we’re of one mind.”

“Oh, as expected of the vice, ya switched gears pretty quickly. I love that trait of ya. If ya ever became mah lover, then I’d have nothin’ to complain.”

“Hmph. I’ve never imagined that things’d turn out like this... So that’s part of this academy too? And here I put in effort to transfer... Wonder whether that was the right

thing to do after all...”

“Hahaha. Ya pretty quick on the uptake, aren’t’cha, Ginbei-san? Yer still a freshman, and yet ya’ve managed to keep yer composure in front of mah student council members, that’s a rare talent, ya know? What do ya say? The treasurer spot’s still open, if yer inclined to do it, then—”

For some reason those three girls seemed to really hit it off with each other.

The three of them left side by side with an unexpectedly harmonious atmosphere among them, whilst ignoring the mountain of bystanders (and me).



I should apologize for the violation of the announcement from earlier.

‘This is a story about the peaceful, trouble-free daily life of an older brother and a younger sister who were separated for a while because of certain circumstances and then unexpectedly reunited to live under the same roof again. With that said, we’re done with the introduction and can carry on with my uninteresting story.’

That’s what I had planned originally. But before I realized it, things turned out to be completely different instead.

The student council president whose behavior honors her name.

The vice president who’s said to be hard to get along with.

The treasurer (or more like candidate?) who’s my friend and has a skin so thick that doesn’t compare to anyone.

The secretary who happens to be my misfortunate little sister.

And last but not least me, who had luck that was bad enough to become an underling of the student council before I could realize it.

I must make an announcement with great regret.

The probability that I could continue a peaceful and ordinary life was lower than winning the lottery, being the owner of a racehorse, or conquering the world.

With an appearance and grades that are the average of the average, a person like me, who doesn’t even have a single shred of boldness within his heart, who doesn’t hold any secret abilities – this whole matter put me in a dire situation.

I wouldn’t want to spend the remaining two-thirds of my high school life stormy and filled with drama like this for anything in the world. My plan was to live together with my sister – for that alone I’ve exhausted efforts worth a lifetime. That workload had been nothing but agony for me.

Still, it’s not like I’d given up already.

When it came to my will to do something about things, even while I was surrounded by

rich people who were fighting like cats and dogs... I wasn't done for just yet.

Living each and every day in peacefulness – that's the one tough demand I wished to see through. From this day onward, I'd devote my whole life to make that happen.

Consequently, there was still one secret that I absolutely had to keep hidden.

Everyone – even the Arisugawa and Takanomiya Families – firmly believed without a shred of doubt that my sister and I were blood-related. However, the 'facts' that had been written in the family registers weren't exactly true.

My sister and I were ought to be fraternal twins... Truth is, we actually weren't blood-related at all, we had both been born from completely different people.

I'd keep this matter, which could easily destroy my 'ordinary everyday life', hidden deep within my chest. And with that, I'll end it for now.

If fate allows it, let us meet again.

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### Notes

1. '*Gakuran*': Traditional male uniform of middle/high school students. Long black coat with collar standing up and loose trousers.
2. You probably heard it in an anime already. Can mean "Jeez" or "Enough!". Let's keep the moe-ness.
3. '*Nikkei Index*': Japanese stock index.
4. All italic from here on was written in English.
5. All italic from here on was written in romaji'd, simplified Japanese.
6. Situation normal from here on. Thanks, Akiko.
- 7.



# Credits

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お兄ちゃんだけで  
愛さてえあれば  
関係ないよわっ

Daisuke Suzuki  
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